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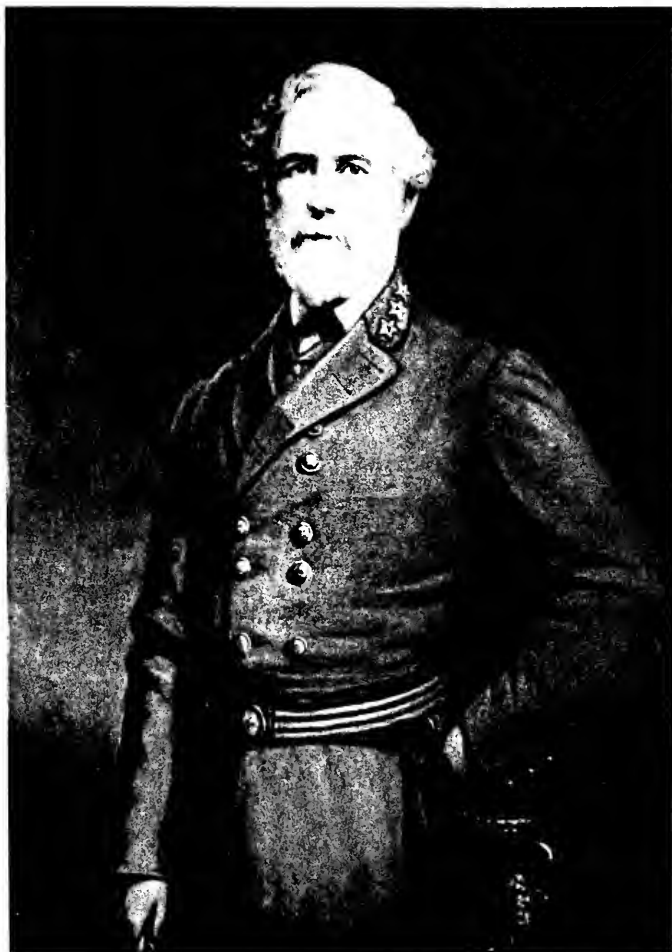


# THE SOUL OF LEE









GENERAL ROBERT E. LEE

*From the Portrait at Lexington Va.*

# THE SOUL OF LEE

BY ONE OF HIS SOLDIERS

RANDOLPH H. McKIM

Late 1st Lieutenant and A. D. C. Brig.-Gen. Geo. H. Steuart's Brigade,  
Major-Gen. Edward Johnson's Division, Ewell's Corps  
Army of Northern Virginia

"If ever man made his life a true poem it was Lee."

—*Gamaliel Bradford.*

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

FOURTH AVENUE & 30TH STREET, NEW YORK

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS

1918

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JAN - 5 1918

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TO  
**My Comrades**  
THE SURVIVORS OF THE ARMY  
OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA  
THIS PICTURE OF OUR GREAT COMMANDER  
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED



## PREFACE

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THE purpose of this little volume is to give in brief compass an epitome of the life and the campaigns of General Robert E. Lee, with sufficient detail, however, to convey a true impression of his genius as a soldier and his exalted character as a man. The author believes that at this crisis when our young men are offering their strength and their lives in the greatest struggle for liberty and democracy the world has ever seen, a study of the life and character of Lee cannot but be an inspiration. For the great Southern leader was more than a Southerner—he was an American;\* and the time has come when the whole country may take an honest pride in his military genius and in the high ideals which governed him in his campaigns, while the study of those campaigns may well arouse the emulation of the young soldiers of our new national army as they mark the splendid valor and constancy of the men who fought in both the Union and the Confederate armies more than fifty years ago.

It will at once be seen that these pages do not aspire to the dignity of a biography of the illustrious

\* Mr. Gamaliel Bradford, a writer of rare insight, himself a man of old New England stock, has shown his perception of this fact by giving his biography the title "*Lee the American.*"

man who is their subject,—yet they are more than an appreciation or a eulogy. They give, I hope, a true outline of Lee's life, a reliable sketch of his campaigns, and a just, if inadequate, impression of his character. They are based upon a painstaking study of his career, and it is believed the picture they present is historically accurate. May I point out to any who may think it too highly colored, that it has been painted chiefly with materials taken from other easels than my own—competent writers and critics, in large part Northern men and Europeans.

It will also be recognized that, while all who write of Lee must needs draw from substantially the same sources, yet there are in this narrative not a few incidents which are quite unfamiliar, and others which have never been published before.

I do not forget in what I have said above that it may be thought that the magnitude of the world conflict now waging so dwarfs the battles and the campaigns of half a century ago that the student of war today can learn little or nothing from them; but on the other hand Gen. Sir Frederick B. Maurice has told us that war is waged today on the same great principles of strategy practiced by Napoleon and Lee. And though the methods and the instruments of war are so vastly changed since 1861, yet there are likenesses as well as contrasts between the two,—and the most vital factor of war, the spirit of man himself, has never changed since the days of Joshua and Judas Maccabeus.

I will only add that I desire to make my own the



words of the author of that charming little volume, *A Rebel's Recollections*:

“Will the reader please bear in mind that my estimate of the character of the Southern troops is a positive and not a comparative one, and that nothing said in praise of the one army is meant to be a reflection on the other. Between Bull Run and Appomattox I had ample opportunity to learn respect for the courage and manliness of the men who overcame us.” (Geo. Cary Eggleston.)

The frontispiece is reproduced from the portrait at Washington and Lee University by kind permission of the President of the University. The original is known as the “Pine Tree Portrait.”



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# I

## ANCESTRY, BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS

*“The fatherlands of Sidney and Bayard never produced a nobler soldier, gentleman and Christian than Gen. Robert E. Lee.”—London Standard.*

## I

### ANCESTRY, BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS

Robert Edward Lee was a scion of an ancient family. Launcelot Lee, who fought at Hastings under the banner of William the Conqueror, in 1066, and Lionel Lee,\* who won fame at the Siege of Acre with Richard Cœur de Lion, in 1192, were his ancestors; and on his maternal side the blood of Robert Bruce flowed in his veins. In American history the Lees of Virginia had been distinguished for character and achievement since the middle of the seventeenth century; but Gen. Robert E. Lee, though he was proud of his name, and resolved never to tarnish it, was yet so far from wishing to exploit his ancestry, that when the project of publishing a Lee genealogy was submitted to him he said: "I think the money had better be appropriated to relieve the poor."

He was born in that Virginian county which the early settlers named "Westmoreland," after that famous shire in the west of England, which has ever been renowned for its beautiful mountains and its lovely lakes—Windermere, Grasmere, Ullswater.

The Virginian Westmoreland presents, indeed, a striking contrast in those respects to the Westmore-

\* The armor worn by Lionel Lee in the crusades may still be seen in the Horse Armory of the Tower of London.

land of old England. For, though on its northern border there flows a majestic river to which all Europe can scarcely show an equal, yet it boasts no charming lakes reflecting woody hills and mirroring the changing hues of the sky, nor any beautiful mountains lifting their lofty heads to heaven. In a word, though it has a beauty and a charm all its own, it cannot rival the picturesqueness of that famous lake country of the northwest of England.

But as the traveller passes through the Virginian Westmoreland, he falls under a spell which few localities anywhere can rival. The forms of the great men who have sprung from its soil rise before him. Their fame towers up to heaven, loftier and more majestic than the mountains of England's Westmoreland. The deeds they have wrought, the ideas they have given to the world, the standards of civic virtue they have upheld, are like lofty peaks piercing the sky on every hand. After all, great men are more impressive than great mountains,—and the great men born in this Virginian county are among the greatest of all time.

Here was born Washington, the Father of his Country, and Monroe, the Father of the Monroe Doctrine. Close to its border was born Madison, the Father of the Constitution. Here, too, was born Thomas Marshall, father of the great Chief Justice John Marshall, so that Westmoreland is the grandsire of that illustrious jurist. Here was born another great jurist, Bushrod Washington, whom President Adams placed second only to Marshall,



and who, in the estimation of Mr. Justice Story, was one of the greatest ornaments that ever adorned the Supreme Bench of the United States. Westmoreland then well deserves to be called, as it has been, "the birthplace of Genius."

Here, too, flourished the first of the Lee name in Virginia, the stout-hearted Colonel Richard Lee, who dared to challenge the power of the mighty Cromwell, and only at last acknowledged his authority on condition that the Old Dominion should never bear taxation without representation. Grand old Stratford House, the Lee ancestral home, has a history scarcely equaled by any other mansion in American history. There lived Governor Thomas Lee, whose worth was so much appreciated in the mother country that Queen Caroline contributed, unsolicited, a large sum from the Privy Purse to help in its rebuilding, when it had been destroyed by fire. There in the same chamber were born two signers of the Declaration of Independence, *par nobile fratrum*, Francis Lightfoot Lee and Richard Henry Lee, the Cicero of the Continental Congress,—scholar, debater, statesman, patriot, orator—the man who dared to propose the resolution that "these colonies are, and by right ought to be, free and independent states"—the man who was unanimously elected president of the American Congress, and was afterwards one of Virginia's first representatives in the United States Senate. It was he who wrote the Memorial of Congress to the people of British America. His hand also produced the Address of Congress to the people of Great Brit-

ain—productions which Mr. Wirt says were “unsurpassed by any of the state papers of the time.” (No wonder the British made such strenuous efforts to capture him!) At Stratford, too, lived Gen. Robert E. Lee’s father, Henry Lee, the famous “Light Horse Harry,” a soldier of marked ability, the favorite of Washington, chosen by Congress to pronounce that great man’s funeral oration; an accomplished classical scholar, a brilliant orator and the historian of the Southern campaigns of the Revolution. And at Stratford was born, on the 19th day of January, 1807, his son Robert Edward Lee, destined to become the greatest soldier in American history.\*

Henry Lee, at the age of nineteen, was nominated by Patrick Henry to be a captain of cavalry; rapidly rose in rank; was presented by Congress in 1779 with a gold medal for “warlike skill and prowess”; became lieutenant colonel of dragoons in 1780; was described by Washington as an officer possessed of “great reserves of genius”; was praised by Lafayette for “his talents as a corps commander”; and by Gen. Nathaniel Greene in the highest terms; while another general officer said: “He seemed to have come out of his mother’s womb a soldier.” After the war, as a member of the Virginia Convention, he pleaded with eloquence and power for the adoption

\* Stratford was a large and stately manor house, not far from the banks of the Potomac, built in the shape of the letter “H.” On its roof were summer houses where ladies and gentlemen promenaded in the evenings.

of the Federal Constitution, with Washington and Madison and Marshall and against Patrick Henry and George Mason and Benjamin Harrison, who opposed its ratification.

When Robert Edward Lee was four years old the family removed to Alexandria, where he received the foundation of a sound classical and mathematical education at the hands of Mr. Wm. B. Leary, for whom he cherished a sincere attachment to the end of his life. We know little of his relations to his father, the latter's ill-health having separated them for a long period; but we see him reverently visiting his grave in South Carolina during the first year of the war, and we note that his only literary work was the editing of his father's Memoirs, in June, 1869, to which is prefixed a biography from his own hand. When he was eleven his father, long an invalid, died, and upon the young Robert devolved the care of his widowed mother, in her declining years and failing health, his eldest brother being absent from home, and his second brother, afterwards Commodore Smith Lee, having entered the Navy. Never did son more faithfully fulfil his trust. He cheerfully executed her orders and attended to her business, even the little household duties which ill-health incapacitated her to perform, and tenderly and untiringly labored to promote her happiness. It is stated that he was accustomed to carry her in his arms to the carriage and arrange her cushions with the gentleness of an experienced nurse. No wonder the dear lady exclaimed, on his departure for West Point, "How

can I live without Robert? He is both son and daughter to me."

He had just graduated at West Point when he was summoned to attend her in her last illness, and we are told that he nursed her with the tenderness and fidelity of a daughter, administering her food and medicine with his own hand, and scarcely for a moment leaving her bedside until the last painful scene was over. In after life he often said "he owed everything to his mother."

Though we know few particulars of Lee's boyhood, we do know that he loved to follow the hunt over hill and vale to the merry sound of the horn and the hound in pursuit of the wily fox or the bounding deer. We know also, on his own authority, that he always loved horses and enjoyed training them "as much as any one." His personal affection for his old war horse "Traveller" is as pathetic as it is beautiful. And this love was reciprocated. "Everybody and everything—his family, his friends, his horse, and his dog—loves Colonel Lee," was said of him when he returned home from the Mexican War.

The venerable and highly esteemed Mr. Benjamin Hallowell, who prepared him for West Point, said that he was as remarkable for the precision of his conduct as for the accuracy and beauty with which he drew the mathematical figures. One of his school-mates remembered that Robert Lee was always looked up to with respect and esteem by the whole school and that he was noted for his quiet and peaceable disposition.

The following remarkable incident related of this period of his life is prophetic of the immense moral force of his manhood. Being invited, during a vacation, to visit a friend of his family who lived in the gay, rollicking style then but too common in old Virginia, he found his host one of the grand old gentlemen of that day, with every fascination of mind and manner, who though not of dissipated habits, led a life which the sterner sense of the boy could not approve. The old man shrank before the unspoken rebuke of the youthful hero. Coming to his bedside the night before his departure, he lamented the idle and useless life into which he had fallen, excusing himself upon the score of loneliness, and the sorrow which weighed upon him in the loss of those most dear. In the most impressive manner he besought his young guest to be warned by his example; prayed him to cherish the good habits he had already acquired, and promised to listen to his entreaties that he would change his own life.\* Young Lee entered West Point in 1825, when he was eighteen years of age. There he was distinguished for the excellence of his scholarship and the purity of his life at a time when according to the statement made by the superintendent to President Adams, drunkenness and dissipation were very prevalent among the cadets. He graduated in 1829, with the second highest honors of his class, and with the record of never having received a demerit for neglect of duty.

\* Popular Life of Gen. R. E. Lee, by Emily V. Mason, p. 24.

Two years later he was united in marriage to Mary Custis, the daughter and heiress of George Washington Parke Custis, and the granddaughter of the wife of General Washington. She had received a fine classical education, and was the heiress of both Arlington and "the White House," on the Pamunkey River, which was the scene of the marriage of Gen. Washington with the widow Custis. Hence her father did not favor the match with the young lieutenant, devoted to a military career. Seven children were born of this marriage, three sons and four daughters, George Washington Custis, Mary Custis, William Henry Fitzhugh, Annie Carter, Eleanor Agnes, Robert Edward, and Mildred.

## II

LEE IN THE SERVICE OF THE UNITED  
STATES ARMY

*“What a grace was seated on his brow!  
. . . the front of Jove himself;  
An eye, like Mars, to threaten and command;  
A station like the herald Mercury,  
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;  
A combination and a form indeed  
Where every God did seem to set his seal,  
To give the world assurance of a man!”*  
—Shakspeare.

. . . "I have no ambition  
To see a goodlier man."  
—Shakspeare.



## II

### LEE IN THE SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

Lieutenant Lee's first assignment to duty was at Old Point, Va., where he remained several years. In 1835 he was appointed assistant astronomer on the commission for marking out the boundary line between Ohio and Michigan. In 1838 he was made captain in the Engineer Corps. He had previously been on duty in Washington as assistant to the chief engineer.

The soul of the man shone out during these early years of his career just as it did in later life, high and pure and noble, so that he was universally beloved and respected by his brother officers.

In 1837-8 Lieutenant Lee did most valuable service as engineer in charge of the improvement of the navigation of the Mississippi, for which St. Louis, as well as Minneapolis and St. Paul will ever owe him a debt of gratitude. The problem was to open a passage for the river at the Des Moines rapids. It was a great feat of engineering. Capt. May, of Illinois, in a notice of Gen. Lee's death wrote: "His exhibition of skill as an engineer and reliable manager made for him thousands of admirers and friends on the Upper and Lower Mississippi. In 1838-9 there was a serious

alarm and real danger of the Mississippi cutting a channel on the Illinois side, by which St. Louis would have become a deserted village, when the talent and skill of R. E. Lee were sought and obtained. He conceived and executed a plan which saved St. Louis from destruction as a commercial city."

In a letter written from St. Louis at this time occurs the following playful passage:

"Tell my cousin Philippa that it is the furthest from my wish to detract from any of the little Lees, but as to her boy being equal to Mr. Rooney (a pet name for his son W. H. F. Lee), it is a thing not even to be supposed, much less believed, although we live in a credulous country, where people stick at nothing from a coon story to a sea serpent."

In 1842 Capt. Lee was stationed at Fort Hamilton, in New York harbor, and soon after was made one of the visitors to West Point.

We come now to his career in the Mexican War in which he won great distinction. His first important service was in March, 1847, in connection with the siege of Vera Cruz where he directed the firing of the guns manned by a detachment of seamen in the trenches. In General Scott's autobiography, he says of Lee: "This officer greatly distinguished himself at the siege of Vera Cruz." Indeed the commanding general throughout the campaign constantly makes honorable mention of him.

At Cerro Gordo he wrote: "I am compelled to make special mention of Capt. R. E. Lee, Engineer. This officer was again indefatigable during these operations in reconnoissances, as daring as laborious,

and of the utmost value. Nor was he less conspicuous in planning batteries, and in conducting columns to their stations under the heavy fire of the enemy." On one of these occasions, having ventured too far from his supporting column, he found himself in the midst of the Mexicans. "He concealed himself under a fallen tree, near a spring where the Mexicans obtained water. While he lay there Mexican soldiers passed and repassed over the tree, and even sat down upon it, without discovering him. He remained until night enabled him to retire in safety."

Throughout the campaign Capt. Lee was constantly distinguished for skill and daring, but the most famous of his achievements was his exploration at night of the Pedregal—"a vast surface of volcanic rocks and scoriæ, pathless, precipitous, broken into every possible form, presenting sharp ridges and deep fissures, exceedingly difficult for the passage even in the daytime of infantry, cavalry, or single horsemen." Seven staff officers dispatched by Gen. Scott had reported that it was impracticable to penetrate the Pedregal in the dark, but Capt. Lee undertook it and succeeded. It was accomplished amid darkness and storm—"without light, without a companion or a guide—scarcely a step could have been taken without fear of death." "The brilliant victory of Contreras on the following morning was made possible, Gen. Scott reported, "only by Capt. Lee's services that night," and he characterized it as "the greatest feat of physical and moral courage

performed by any individual, in my knowledge, pending the campaign." The same officer in his report of the battle at Chapultepec speaking of Lee says he was "as distinguished for felicitous execution as for science and daring," and again, "Capt. Lee, so constantly distinguished, also bore important orders from me (Sept. 13th) until he fainted from a wound."

Other American officers bore similar high testimony to Lee's invaluable services, among whom we may mention Gen. P. F. Smith, Gen. Pillow, and Gen. Shields. Throughout the Mexican War he was equally distinguished for military skill and for personal daring.

His letters at this period to members of his family show on the one hand his enthusiastic appreciation of the beauty of the scenery in Mexico, and on the other, his keen interest in the politics of the day.

It is noteworthy also that he fully reciprocated Gen. Scott's warm friendship. He writes: "The great cause of our success was in our leader. It was his stout heart that cast us on the shore of Vera Cruz; his bold self-reliance that forced us through the pass at Cerro Gordo; his indomitable courage that, amidst all the doubts and difficulties that surrounded us at Pueblo, pressed us forward to this capital, and finally brought us within its gates."

His description of the battle of Cerro Gordo is very graphic. In it he says: "The papers cannot tell you what a horrible sight a field of battle is, nor will I." In another letter he tells his son Custis how

he had the wounded Mexicans carried to a house by the roadside, where they were attended by Mexican surgeons; of his finding by the side of a hut a little Mexican boy who had been a bugler or drummer, with his arm terribly shattered, and how a large Mexican soldier, in the last agonies of death, had fallen on him; how he was attracted to the scene by the grief of a little girl; how he had the dying Mexican taken off the boy, and how grateful the little girl was. "Her large black eyes," he said, "were streaming with tears, her hands crossed over her breast; her hair in one long plat behind reached her waist, her shoulders and arms bare, and without stockings or shoes. Her plaintive tone of '*Mille gracias, Señor,*' as I had the dying man lifted off the boy and both carried to the hospital, still rings in my ears."\* In this incident another aspect of the Soul of Lee is revealed—his humanity, his tenderness, his sympathy, his unflinching effort to relieve suffering, without distinction of friend or foe.

Of this characteristic we have the following testimony from the pen of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, who writes: "We had the same intimate associates who thought as I did that no other youth or man so unites the qualities that win warm friendship and command high respect. For he was full of sympathy and kindness, genial and fond of gay conversation, and even of fun, that made him the most agreeable of companions, while his correctness of

\* Quoted by Gen. Fitzhugh Lee.

demeanor and language and attention to all duties, personal and official, and a dignity as much a part of himself as the elegance of his person, gave him a superiority that every one acknowledged in his heart. He was the only one of all the men I have known who could laugh at the faults and follies of his friends in such a manner as to make them ashamed without touching their affection for him, and to confirm their respect and sense of his superiority.

"I saw strong evidence of the sympathy of his nature the morning after the first engagement of our troops in the valley of Mexico. I had lost a cherished young relative in that action, known to Lee only as my relative. Meeting me, he suddenly saw in my face the effect of that loss, burst into tears and expressed his deep sympathy as tenderly in words as his lovely wife would have done."

Lee's opinion regarding the right of the conqueror to exact indemnity, is interesting in this crisis of the Great War that is convulsing the world. He wrote:

We have the right, by the laws of war, of dictating the terms of peace and requiring indemnity for our losses and expenses. Rather than forego that right, except through a spirit of magnanimity to a crushed foe, I would fight them ten years, but I would be generous in exercising it.

He returned from the Mexican campaign "crowned with honors and covered with brevets." More than twelve years were to elapse before Lee was called to face the great crisis presented by the outbreak of the war between the states.

Invited by the Cuban Junta to become their military leader, he declines. Appointed a member of the Board of Engineers, he was employed until 1852 in strengthening the port of Baltimore by new defenses.

Then followed three years as superintendent of the Military Academy at West Point, during which term he raised the discipline of the corps to a higher state of efficiency and improved the course of study. From 1855 to 1860 his service was in the West and the Southwest, as Lieutenant Colonel of the Second Cavalry—in Missouri and in Texas.

His experience with the Quartermaster's department in 1855 may help some of our officers in 1917 to endure *their* experiences today with more equanimity. He writes.

"I have been busy all the week superintending and drilling recruits. Not a stitch of clothing has as yet arrived for them, though I made the necessary requisition for it to be sent here more than two months ago in Louisville. Yesterday, at muster, I found one of the late arrivals in a dirty, tattered shirt and pants, with a white hat and shoes and other garments to match. I asked him why he had not put on clean clothes. He said he had none. I asked him if he could not wash and mend those. He said he had nothing else to put on. I then told him immediately after muster to go down to the river, wash his clothes and sit on the bank and watch the passing steamboats till they dried, and then mend them. This morning at inspection he looked as

proud as possible, stood in the position of a soldier with his little fingers on the seams of his pants, his beaver cocked back, and his toes sticking through his shoes, but his skin and solitary two garments clean. He grinned very happily at my compliments."

In a letter from Fort Brown, Texas, in 1856, Lee expressed his views on the institution of slavery thus:

"In this enlightened age there are few, I believe, but will acknowledge that slavery, as an institution, is a moral and political evil in any country. I think it, however, a greater evil to the white man than to the black race, and while my feelings are strongly interested in behalf of the latter, my sympathies are stronger for the former. The blacks are immeasurably better off here than in Africa, morally, socially and physically. . . . While we see the course of the final abolition of slavery is onward and we give it the aid of our prayers and all justifiable means in our power, we must leave the progress as well as the result in His hands who sees the end, . . . and with whom a thousand years are but as a single day."

The last incident of note in Lee's life before the storm of war broke over the country is connected with the "John Brown Raid" in October, 1859. Being on furlough at Arlington when that fanatic-madman made his invasion of Virginia and seized Harper's Ferry, he was ordered to proceed to that place with a battalion of marines and arrest the invader. This he did on the 17th of October, quietly and expeditiously. The insurgents, few in number, were all killed or mortally wounded but four, John



Brown, Stevens, Coppie and Shields. The ring-leader was tried, convicted and hanged December 2, 1859.

Ordered back to Texas, Lee remained at San Antonio in discharge of his duty until February, 1861, when he was summoned to Washington, reaching Arlington March 1.



### III

## THE SOUL OF LEE IN THE GREAT CRISIS OF HIS LIFE

*“Non ille pro caris amicis  
Aut patria timidus perire.”*

*“I did only what my duty demanded. I could have taken no other course without dishonor.”—Robert E. Lee.*

*“The degree of the love of liberty is proportioned in each man to the moral elevation he has attained.”*  
—Cavour.

*“You cannot barter manhood for peace, nor the right of self-government for life or property.”—Robert E. Lee.*

*“Let each man resolve that the right of self-government, liberty and peace, shall find in him a defender.”*  
—Robert E. Lee.

### III

## THE SOUL OF LEE IN THE GREAT CRISIS OF HIS LIFE

The great crisis had come. Virginia had passed the ordinance of secession and joined her Southern sisters. What course should Lee take? He loved the Union with a passionate devotion. His ancestors had played a great part in its formation. And though the right of secession had been acknowledged in the early history of the country, quite as much at the North as at the South; and though that right was defended in the text-book on the Constitution (Rawle's) taught at West Point in the year before his entrance as a cadet; yet Lee saw that there could be then no such thing as peaceable secession. "Secession," he wrote, "is nothing but revolution." And further, "I can anticipate no greater calamity for the country than a dissolution of the Union."

While his mind was torn with doubt as to his duty, he received through the Hon. Francis P. Blair, and at the instance of Mr. Lincoln, the offer of the supreme command of the United States Army. But neither his ambition as a soldier, nor his love for the Union, could tempt him to accept this magnificent offer. He says, "I declined the offer he made me to take command of the army in the field, stating as candidly

and courteously as I could, that though opposed to secession and deprecating war, I could take no part in the invasion of the Southern States."

And yet he hesitated to break the bonds which a lifetime of service in the U. S. Army (he was then 54) had forged. It was a choice as full of anguish as perhaps any human soul was ever called to make. Through the long night he wrestled with the question in his chamber at Arlington, pacing the floor hour after hour, and often crying to God for guidance. At last the choice was made. He threw in his lot with Virginia, and in doing so deliberately sacrificed nearly everything that men hold dear, home and fortune and professional career, and the dazzling rewards of ambition.

But why? Because he held his allegiance to his state supreme; because by ancestry, by inherited traditions, he was a Virginian of the Virginians, and could not fail to reflect the feeling which his eloquent father expressed when he exclaimed in the debate on the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798: "Virginia is my country, her will I obey, however lamentable the fate to which it may subject me." To use his own words: "I had to meet the question whether I should take part against my native state. I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relations, my children, my home." Not a few of the brave and candid men of the North have declared that had they been placed as Lee was placed, they would have done as Lee did.

Gamaliel Bradford, contemplating the perhaps impossible contingency of a future sectional separation in our country, says, "I should myself be first, last, and always a son and subject of New England and Massachusetts," words which are the echo of an utterance of another distinguished son of Massachusetts, Charles Francis Adams, who said at the Lee Centennial, "If in all respects similarly circumstanced, I hope I should have been filial and unselfish enough to have done as Lee did."

Lee's anguish of soul in deciding to resign his commission is reflected in his letter to Gen. Scott, April 20, 1861, in which he refers to "the struggle it has cost me to separate myself from a service to which I have devoted the best years of my life and all the ability I possessed." Of all the inner struggles of his life, it is evident this was the most intense, the most painful. Never, in any of his great battles,—Chancellorsville, Sharpsburg, Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Petersburg, was his great soul so shaken as on that night in his chamber at Arlington when this momentous decision was trembling in the balance. Even now, after the lapse of fifty-six years, no generous heart can contemplate without emotion and admiration this midnight wrestling of a brave and unselfish man.

One question alone presented itself to his great soul: "What is my duty?" He put aside ambition—personal inclination—every selfish interest. Nothing weighed in the balance at that supreme moment but the purest, highest, most unselfish motives.

To this Charles Francis Adams bears noble testimony: "Lee was a soldier; as such, rank and the possibility of high command and great achievements were very dear to him. His choice put rank and command behind him. He quietly and silently made the greatest sacrifice a soldier can be asked to make. With war plainly impending, the foremost place in the army of which he was an officer was now tendered him; his answer was to lay down the commission he already held." And this generous foe goes on to say, "He stands awaiting sentence at the bar of history in very respectable company. Associated with him are for instance, William of Orange, known as the Silent; John Hampden, the original *Pater Patriæ*; Oliver Cromwell, the Protector of the English Commonwealth; Sir Harry Vane, once a governor of Massachusetts; and George Washington, a Virginian of note." It is of moment to enquire what was Lee's attitude,—once he had cast in his lot with Virginia—touching the nature of the struggle between the North and the South. Let us look into his soul for the answer. We can do this because his words were ever the true expression of his soul. "I had no other guide," he wrote, "nor had I any other object, than the defence of those principles of American liberty upon which the constitutions of the several states were originally founded; and unless they are strictly observed, I fear there will be an end to republican government in this country."\*

\* Jones, *Rem.*, p. 218.



And again, "We had, I was satisfied, sacred principles to maintain and rights to defend, for which we were in duty bound to do our best, even if we perished in the endeavor." To this add his words to his soldiers, "You cannot barter manhood for peace, nor the right of self-government for life or property. . . . Let us then oppose constancy to adversity, fortitude to suffering, and courage to danger, with the firm assurance that He who gave freedom to our fathers will bless the efforts of their children to preserve it."\*

These words leave no room for doubt that to the soul of Robert E. Lee the cause of the Confederacy was the cause of Liberty and Self-government, and that history must recognize in him an illustrious champion of Freedom and Democracy. The first of these conclusions can hardly be denied by any candid historian, but the second is challenged even by Mr. Gamaliel Bradford,—in spite of his almost boundless admiration for the character of Lee.

\*In an unpublished letter, dated Richmond, Virginia, July 27, 1861 (see *Life Bishop Kerfoot*, James Pott & Co., 1876, Vol. I, p. 223), Gen. Lee wrote:

"As far as my voice and counsel go, it will be continued on our side as long as there is one horse that can carry his rider and one arm to wield a sword. I prefer annihilation to submission. They may destroy, but I trust they will never conquer us. I bear no malice, have no animosities to indulge, no selfish purpose to gratify. My only object is to repel the invaders of our peace and the spoilers of our homes. I hope in time they will see the injustice of their course and return to their better nature."

Commenting on the words just quoted, he is "almost" ready to look upon Lee "as one of the great martyrs of liberty"—but he feels compelled to refuse him that chaplet of glory on the ground that Lee, though he was no advocate of slavery, though before the war he had freed his own slaves, and had declared that "slavery, as an institution, is a moral and political evil in any country," "was yet, after all, fighting for slavery, and he must have known perfectly well that if the South triumphed and maintained its independence, slavery would grow and flourish for another generation, if not for another century."

But what if Lee believed, as apparently Jefferson Davis believed in 1861, that in any case slavery was doomed by the moral judgment of the world, and that even if successful in their revolution, the Southern states would be compelled sooner or later, by gradual emancipation, or otherwise, to confer freedom upon their slaves.

Will not the historian in determining this question refer to the expressed opinions of the men who fought the war—statesmen and soldiers of the North, and statesmen and soldiers of the South?

What then, we ask, were the avowed purposes of leaders on both sides? And first of Mr. Lincoln:

In August, 1862, he wrote Mr. Greeley: "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing

some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union.” \*

Mr. Lincoln then was waging the war not to free the slaves but to save the Union. His Emancipation Proclamation (January 1, 1863) was avowedly a war measure, and it did not proclaim the freedom of *all* the slaves, but only “those persons held as slaves in any state the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States.” Slaves in all states not in rebellion (as Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri) were not released from slavery by the Emancipation Proclamation.

On the other hand Jefferson Davis declared that the South was not fighting for slavery, and in fact he embarked on the enterprise of secession believing that he would, as a consequence, lose his slaves, for he wrote to his wife in February, 1861: “*In any case our slave property will eventually be lost,*” that is to say, whether successful or not in establishing the Southern Confederacy. Lee, long before the war, emancipated the few slaves that came to him by inheritance, whereas his Union antagonist, Gen. Grant, held on to those that had come to him through marriage with a Southern woman, until they were freed by the Thirteenth Amendment.

Stonewall Jackson never owned but two slaves—a

\* Short Life by Nicolay, p. 336.

man and a woman—whom he bought at their earnest solicitation. And he kept account of the wages he would have paid for white labor, and when he considered himself reimbursed for the purchase money gave them their freedom. Gen. Joseph E. Johnston never owned a slave, nor did Gen. A. P. Hill, nor Gen. Fitzhugh Lee. Gen. J. E. B. Stuart, the famous cavalry leader, never owned but two, and he rid himself of these long before the war.\*

To these facts as to the attitude of the leaders and commanders of the Confederacy, should be added the testimony of the rank and file of the Southern armies. With one voice they avowed then, with one voice they avow now, that they were not marching and fighting and suffering and dying for slavery but for the right of self-government. Old soldiers, known to the writer, declare they never met a Southern soldier who had drawn his sword to perpetuate slavery. What they had at heart was the preservation of the supreme and sacred right of self-government. They had the same pride in their cause as Lee had when he expressed his absolute belief in its nobility and justice, and his resolute determination to fight for it so long as there was any possibility of success. To use his own words, "Let each man resolve that the right of self-government, liberty and peace, shall find in him a defender."

And what was true of the soldiers of the South was

\* See article by Col. W. Gordon McCabe in the *London Saturday Review* of March 5, 1910.

true also (unless the present writer is misinformed) of the soldiers of the North. Slavery was not the issue in their minds. As a general rule, at least, they were not fighting to free the slaves but to preserve the Union.

In the light of these facts—of these sentiments—of the actors in the grim tragedy of the war, it may be confidently affirmed that the flag of the Confederacy was no more an emblem of slave power than the Stars and Stripes, for the Constitution of the United States recognized the institution of slavery as distinctly as did the Constitution of the Confederate States up to the date of the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment in December, 1865.

But the Southern Confederacy is reproached with the fact that it was deliberately built on slavery. Slavery, we are told, was its cornerstone. But if slavery was the cornerstone of the Confederacy, what are we to say of the Constitution of the United States? That instrument as originally adopted contained three sections which recognized slavery; and whereas the Constitution of the Southern Confederacy absolutely prohibited the slave trade, the Constitution of the United States prohibited the abolition of the slave trade for twenty years from its adoption—against the earnest protest of Virginia. And if the men of the South are reproached for denying liberty to three and a half millions of human beings, at the same time that they professed to be waging a great war for their own liberty, what are we to say of the revolting colonies of 1776, who rebelled against the British Crown to

achieve their liberty while slavery existed in every one of the thirteen colonies unrepudiated?

Cannot those historians who deny that Lee fought for liberty because the South still held the blacks in bondage see that upon the same principle they must impugn the sincerity of the signers of the Declaration of Independence? For while in that famous instrument they affirmed before the world that "all men were created free and equal," and that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed," they took no steps whatever to free the slaves. Indeed if it be maintained that the cornerstone of the Constitution of the Southern Confederacy was slavery, then it must be acknowledged that the Constitution of the United States had a worse cornerstone,—since it held the ægis of its protection over the slave trade itself!

The noble-hearted biographer of Lee, quoted above, Mr. Gamaliel Bradford, holds that Lee, in spite of his passionate declarations that he was fighting in the cause of liberty, was after all in fact fighting for the perpetuation of slavery. This proposition rests upon an inference that might or might not be correct, as we have suggested above. But more than this, it necessitates the position that in fighting against the United States he was fighting against a power which repudiated slavery and demanded its abolition. But, let it be observed, this was not true of the United States until the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment on December 18, 1865, up to which date the United States was still a slave power.

We have dwelt upon this question somewhat in detail because a correct understanding of it is vital to a true elucidation of the course which Lee pursued in this the greatest crisis of his life. His whole character and career hinges upon the purity and elevation of his motives as a soldier of the Confederacy. To him it was a sacred cause, dearer than life. He was fighting in protest against the overthrow of the constitutional balance of the government of the Fathers. To his mind "the future of popular government depended on the careful balance of local and central authority for which the Constitution originally provided." These are his words, "All that the South ever desired was that the Union as established by our forefathers should be preserved, and that the government as originally organized should be administered in purity and truth." And again, "I did only what my duty demanded. I could have taken no other course without dishonor. Thus, if it were all to be done over again, I should act in precisely the same manner."

A recent historian of the United States has generously said, "Censure's voice upon the action of such a noble soul is hushed. . . . Could we share the thoughts of that high-minded man as he paced the broad-pillared veranda of his stately Arlington house, his eyes glancing across the river at the flag of his country waving above the dome of the Capitol, and then resting on the soil of his native Virginia, we should be willing now to recognize in him one of the finest products of American life. For

surely, as the years go on, we shall see that such a life can be judged by no partisan measure, and we shall come to look upon him as the English of our day regard Washington, whom little more than a century ago they delighted to call a rebel.”\*

On the 20th of April Lee had tendered his resignation as an officer of the United States Army. On April 23d in the presence of the Convention of the State and a large assemblage of citizens, he was presented his commission as Major General and commander-in-chief of the forces of Virginia by Mr. Janney, president of the Convention.

In accepting it General Lee said, “I would have much preferred had your choice fallen upon an abler man. Trusting in Almighty God, an approving conscience, and the aid of my fellow-citizens, I devote myself to the service of my native State, in whose behalf alone will I ever again draw my sword.” Before the sun set on that very day he was called upon to resign the commission just put into his hands.

Alexander H. Stephens had come to Richmond to induce Virginia to enter the Confederacy which had been formed by the states to the South. The compact which he came to propose left Lee out of consideration, and, in order to ratify it, it was necessary that Lee should resign the office of commander of the forces of Virginia which had been that very morning bestowed upon him under such impres-

\* History of the U. S. by James Ford Rhodes, Vol. III, p. 413.



sive circumstances by the Virginia Convention,—and this without any compensation and without any promise of rank in the Confederate Army.

Mr. Stephens says, “I knew that one word, or even a look of dissatisfaction from him, would terminate the negotiations with which I was entrusted.”

General Lee did not hesitate a moment, but, recognizing that he alone stood between the Confederacy and his state, at once consented to the proposal, and surrendered the sword which Virginia had just put into his hand. It was an act of self-abnegation fit to be placed by the side of his declination of the chief command of the United States Army a few days before, for it reduced him to a subordinate and inconspicuous position in the new Confederacy. This noble disinterestedness—this complete readiness to subordinate his personal interest to the good of the cause he had espoused, was characteristic of the man—was indeed one of the most conspicuous features of his character.

It should be added that after Lee resigned his Virginia commission he proceeded quietly to find positions for the officers who had been on his staff, and was arranging to enlist himself as a private in a cavalry company.\*

It should also be recorded that he said to Gen. Imboden that the South must be prepared for a longer war than that of the Revolution, and for still

\* *Reminiscences of R. E. Lee*, by Rev. J. Wm. Jones, p. 168.

greater sacrifices. To another he said the war might last ten years.\*

\*When the war was over, the President of the United States declared that, "if the Reconstruction Bill then pending became a law, (and it did become a law), it would be to all the world a justification of the contention of the South, that they were, in truth and in fact, fighting for their liberty; and, instead of branding their leaders by the dishonoring name of traitors against a righteous government, would elevate them in history to the rank of self-sacrificing patriots; consecrate them to the admiration of the world; and place them by the side of Washington, Hampden and Sidney."

(Andrew Johnson.)

## IV

### LEE AS A MASTER OF OFFENSIVE STRATEGY

*"The unparalleled audacity of his campaigns."*  
—Gen. Alexander.

*"His name might be called Audacity."*—Col. Ives.

*"In the boldness and sagacity of his strategy . . . he resembled Napoleon himself."*—Capt. Cecil Battine.

*"Lee was undoubtedly one of the greatest, if not the greatest soldier, who ever spoke the English tongue."*  
—Col. Henderson.

*"His campaigns have much in common with those of Napoleon, and fascinate the reader for the same reasons."*  
—London Times, 1865.

*"Lee made five campaigns in a single year; no other man and no other army ever did as much."*  
—Col. Eben Swift.

## IV

### LEE AS A MASTER OF OFFENSIVE STRATEGY

During the first thirteen months of the war between the States Lee's services, though invaluable in the organization of the army,\* were inconspicuous; and the only campaign he directed, that in West Virginia, was unsuccessful. He was freely and severely criticised by not a few at the South, notably by Pollard. But, when on June 1, 1862, by reason of the wounding of Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, he became commander of the army of Northern Virginia, his military genius burst forth like the sun from behind a cloud, and henceforth he became the idol of his army and indeed of the whole South. It is appropriate to note at this point that his great fame as a commander was achieved in less than three years of active service.

Although now fifty-four years of age, he was in the full vigor of his manhood, both in mind and body, the very embodiment of manly grace and beauty, of kingly stature, "with a noble and commanding presence and an admirable, graceful and athletic figure."

\* Gen. Scott had pronounced him the best organizer in this country, and congratulated himself upon the fact that the Federal organization was well under way before Lee began that of the South.

His face was clothed with a dignity which instantly commanded respect, but there was in the expression of his eyes a profound human sympathy, which won the heart. One of his latest biographers has well said, "It cannot harm a royal soul to dwell within a royal body, and not Pericles nor Washington would seem in this more royal than was Lee."\*

Lee found the army somewhat dispirited and depressed, suffering also from a want of cooperation; and when a council of war was called the consensus of opinion favored the evacuation of its position and a retirement to a point nearer Richmond; but he overruled this proposal, and ordered a strong defensive line to be constructed on substantially the same line then occupied, and then prepared to assume the offensive. Facing McClellan's army of 105,000 men (June 20, 1862), with but 50,000, Lee called upon the Richmond authorities for reinforcements, and within three weeks his army had been increased to about 80,000 men, and had been thoroughly organized. On June 26th he attacked McClellan in his entrenchments and in a series of engagements covering seven days forced him to retreat with great loss to the shelter of his gunboats at Harrison's Landing on the James River.

Thus Lee had at one blow raised the siege of Richmond and defeated an elaborate campaign which had been prepared with great care and prosecuted at enormous expenditure of men and material.

\* Gamaliel Bradford, p. 21.

Among the fruits of his victory were the capture of more than 10,000 prisoners, 52 pieces of artillery, and 35,000 stands of small arms. But the best fruit of the battles was the spirit and enthusiasm created in the Confederate Army, and the confidence in the genius of Lee, which his masterly strategy had engendered in both the army and the people.

In the operations of this his first great campaign, Lee showed that same aggressive energy and daring which characterized him throughout his career, as a commander—as at 2d Manassas, at Sharpsburg, at Chancellorsville, and at Gettysburg. Those who describe him as a master of defensive war, but lacking the qualities necessary for the offensive, are strangely blind to the facts of his military career. Splendid audacity is perhaps the most conspicuous feature of Lee's character as a soldier. In this his first great engagement, he stood in his breastworks close to Richmond facing McClellan's army of 70,000 on the south of the Chickahominy, with only 27,000 men, while he massed 53,000 against the Federal right on the north side of that river. It was by offensive, not defensive strategy, that he raised the siege of Richmond in those July days of 1862.

We may pause here to note that Lee had never commanded an army in the field before, and the ill success of his West Virginia campaign had created doubts in many minds as to his possessing the qualities of an aggressive commander. This led Alexander, afterwards Chief of Artillery, Longstreet's Corps, to enquire of Col. Joseph C. Ives, of the staff

of President Jefferson Davis, whether Lee possessed the *audacity* that would be requisite for the commander of an inferior force in conflict with the superior force of the North, and he tells us that Ives “reined up his horse, stopped in the road, and said, ‘Alexander, if there is one man in either army, Confederate or Federal, head and shoulders above every other in *audacity*, it is General Lee. His name might be Audacity. He will take more desperate chances and take them quicker than any other general in this country, North or South; and you will live to see it too.’”

This remarkable divination of Lee’s character as a soldier was more than justified by this his first campaign. Both his strategy and his tactics were definitely and boldly offensive. Even before Stonewall Jackson had brought his amazing campaign in the valley of Virginia to a close,—on June 8th—Lee had written him of his design to bring him down to attack McClellan’s right wing, and had made suggestions as to how he might mislead the enemy. Secretly and swiftly, as an eagle swooping down upon his prey, that splendid officer executed the orders of his Chief,—and yet, for some unexplained reason, once upon the ground, Jackson was neither as swift nor as effective as was his wont.

There were other failures in this campaign which detracted from the completeness of Lee’s victory,—failures of staff officers, failures of commanders, mistakes of judgment,—all the faults to be expected in a new army not yet thoroughly compacted and dis-



ciplined; but throughout, from the moment when the assault on the Union right was ordered till McClellan was driven under the protecting wings of his gunboats at Harrison's Landing, the genius of Lee's offensive strategy and offensive tactics was conspicuous.

But a new campaign was now determined upon. McClellan was still encamped on the James River but two marches away from the Confederate capital, and he commanded a brave and well-equipped army of 101,000 men. Instead of attacking the Federal army in its strongly fortified position Lee resolved to march north and threaten Washington and thus draw McClellan out of his trenches and relieve Richmond of danger. The campaign that followed was one of the most brilliant of the war, and exhibited the daring strategy of Lee to the best advantage. Gen. Pope was his adversary,—Pope whose "head-quarters" were to be "in the saddle," and who let his army know that "lines of retreat" and "bases of supply" were words which had no place in his vocabulary. Stonewall Jackson with 8000 men met Pope's advance forces at Slaughter Mountain near Cedar Run, and defeated them.\*

This decided the Washington authorities to order McClellan to evacuate the Peninsula and move his Army to Washington. Lee was now free to move

\* The losses in this battle were as follows:

Confederates, killed, wounded and missing . . . .	1367
Federals, killed, wounded and missing . . . . .	2381

against Pope with the bulk of his army. In the wonderful campaign that followed we see to advantage the splendid combination of Lee and Jackson cooperating for the success of the South. It has been well said by a discriminating Northern writer that "Lee and Jackson probably formed as wonderful a pair of military geniuses as ever existed."

It is no part of the purpose of these pages to undertake a detailed discussion of the campaigns of Lee,—with the possible exception of Gettysburg,\* but rather to enable the reader to see what manner of man Lee was in the clash of battle, and in the conception and execution of his great campaigns.

Lee, arriving at Jackson's camp on August 15th, at once saw an opportunity of striking Pope a decisive blow and cutting off his retreat to Washington, and promptly issued the orders and made the dispositions to carry out his plan. Unfortunately, however, a staff officer with a copy of the order on his person was captured, and the plan thus revealed to Pope, who lost no time in moving his army out of its perilous position.

Fortune, which in this had favored Pope, now reciprocally favored the Southern commander; for Stuart, in a bold raid in Pope's rear, captured the latter's private despatch book, which revealed the fact that the reinforcements which would reach Pope within five days would raise his army to nearly 130,000 men.

\* See Appendix.

As Lee's army was little over 54,000 men, his situation was almost desperate, unless he could promptly strike an effective blow. This, with his usual quick decision, he resolved to do. His plan was a daring one. Jackson with about 22,000 infantry and 2000 cavalry was to make a circuitous march of over 50 miles, and seize Pope's depot of supplies, 24 miles in his rear. He himself, with Longstreet and 30,000 men, would hold the line of the Rappahannock, while Jackson was making his forced march. By this hazardous manœuvre Lee would divide his army in two, leaving Pope's army of 80,000 men midway between the two halves. No wonder a very high Federal authority writes:

"The disparity between Pope's force and that of Jackson is so enormous that it is impossible not to be amazed at the audacity of the Confederate general, in thus risking an encounter in which the very existence of Jackson's command would be imperiled." \*

Col. Henderson, Stonewall Jackson's biographer, remarks: "We have record of few enterprises of greater daring than that which was there decided on. To risk cause and country, name and reputation, on a single throw, and to abide the issue with unflinching heart, is the supreme exhibition of the soldier's fortitude."

We cannot here recapitulate the marvellous story of this battle,—how Lee, with Longstreet, by hard

\* Ropes, *History of the Civil War*. Vol. II, p. 124.

marching and harder fighting at length effected a junction with Jackson at Thoroughfare Gap; how the Federal soldiers despite their valor were repulsed with bloody losses in six assaults; how Jackson's men, when their ammunition ran low, stood on the railroad embankment and hurled stones at their attackers; how, at a critical moment, Longstreet opened upon Pope's lines a flanking fire of artillery which disorganized the Federals and threw them into confusion, and the great battle was won. Within a few days afterwards the whole Federal army took refuge within the fortified works about Alexandria, having lost, killed, wounded and missing nearly 15,000 men,—the Confederate loss being something over 9000.

This second battle of Manassas exhibits one of Lee's "unjustifiable audacities," as his critics say. "The rules of war," says Ropes, "allow of no such dangerous movement as Jackson's." No, but Lee was a law unto himself in war. His necessities compelled him to take enormous risks. The results justified his audacious strategy. Henderson—than whom we have no superior critic—says, "The campaign against Pope has seldom been surpassed."

The invasion of Maryland was the next scene in the great drama, followed soon by the terrific battle of Sharpsburg, or Antietam. It was the 5th of September when the Confederate legions crossed the Potomac and took position at Frederick, Md., behind the Monocacy River. They had been reinforced by the divisions of McLaws and D. H. Hill,

which had been left at Richmond; but the long, forced marches and the hard service the army had endured during the five weeks' campaign since the battles around Richmond began, had greatly thinned their ranks. Large numbers of the men were barefooted. "The soldier was still there with his gun and his ammunition—but his clothes—from the hat on his head to his shoeless feet—were tattered and torn." The people of Maryland wondered that such a tatterdemalion army as this could have won such renown. Even "Stonewall" Jackson disappointed their expectations as they noted his coarse homespun uniform and his old slouch hat. Lee, on the other hand, with his noble and heroic bearing, the beau ideal of a great commander, elicited universal admiration.

Lee's first move was the investment and capture of Harper's Ferry with twelve thousand troops, seventy-three pieces of artillery, thirteen thousand stands of small arms, and immense supplies. This was the achievement of his matchless lieutenant, Stonewall Jackson. And now, we come to the fierce and bloody battle of Sharpsburg (Antietam) where again the genius of Lee was brilliantly displayed, and also that same sublime audacity which was one of his most conspicuous characteristics. The story of the lost order which fell into McClellan's hands by a strange accident need not be repeated here, but, by common consent, it is agreed among critics, that the revelation it made of the positions occupied by the Confederate Army,—especially the absence of Jackson at

Harper's Ferry—ought to have enabled the Union commander to destroy Lee's army in detail.

But the tactical genius of Lee and the indomitable resolution of his ragged troops prevented such a consummation. Gen. McClellan reports that he had in the field on September 17th, 87,164 men of all arms. To this great force Gen. Lee was able to oppose only 35,000 men,—such had been the immense depletion of his ranks through the exhaustion of his army. Thousands and thousands of stragglers had been left behind in Virginia—most of them barefooted. It was fortunate for Lee that hardly more than 57,000 of McClellan's troops were actually engaged in the battle. Nearly 30,000 of his men did not fire a shot. It should also be remembered that, on the other hand, A. P. Hill's division did not arrive on the field to support Lee till the afternoon, having left Harper's Ferry at 7 A.M.

No battle of the war, perhaps, exhibits in stronger light the splendid tenacity and valor of American manhood, North and South, than this battle of Sharpsburg. It exhibits also more vividly than perhaps any other the glorious and invincible audacity of the soul of Lee.

When the long, terrible day of bloody conflict was over, and the Confederate generals, one after another, gave in to the commander-in-chief the story of their sanguinary losses, the anxious question was asked, "Shall this army stand its ground, or shall it retreat into Virginia?" Not a voice was raised in favor of the former alternative. Even the iron resolution

of Jackson seemed to yield before the peril of another battle, with thinned and exhausted ranks, and a great river behind them, besides an army vastly superior in numbers before them.

But from one indomitable heart the hope of victory had not yet vanished.\* In the deep silence of the night, more oppressive than the stunning roar of battle, Lee, still mounted, stood on the high road to the Potomac, and as general after general rode in wearily from the front, he asked quietly of each, "How is it on your part of the line?" Each told the same tale: their men were worn out; the enemy's numbers were overwhelming; there was nothing left but to retreat across the Potomac before daylight. Even Jackson had no other counsel to offer. His report was not the less impressive for his quiet and respectful tone. He had had to contend, he said, against the heaviest odds he had ever met. Many of his divisional and brigade commanders were dead or wounded, and his loss had been severe. Hood, who came next, was quite unmanned. He exclaimed that he had no men left! "Great God," cried Lee, with an excitement he had not yet displayed, "where is the splendid division you had this morning?" "They are lying on the field where you sent them," was the reply, "for few have straggled. My division has been almost wiped out."

"After all had given their opinion, there was an

\* The next day Lee laid before Jackson a plan for attack, but after careful consideration it was abandoned.

appalling silence, which seemed to last for several minutes, and then General Lee, rising erect in his stirrups, said, 'Gentlemen, we will not cross the Potomac tonight. You will go to your respective commands, strengthen your lines; send two officers from each brigade towards the ford to collect your stragglers. Many have come in. I have had the proper steps taken to collect all the men who are in the rear. If McClellan wants to fight in the morning, I will give him battle again. Go!' Without a word of remonstrance the group broke up, leaving their great commander alone with his responsibility."\*

But McClellan did not want to fight. He had had enough. Lee's battle gauge was not taken up. "Of General Lee's management of the battle (of Sharpsburg) there is nothing but praise to be said." So writes Mr. John Codman Ropes. He also says, "The Confederate infantry did not exceed 31,200 men, or thereabouts, while . . . the only troops put in by McClellan numbered about 46,000." (Troops not put in 24,000.) He further says, "It's likely more men were killed and wounded on the 17th of September than on any single day in the whole war." General Alexander says, "It was the bloodiest battle ever fought upon this continent."

The Confederate loss he puts at 8000 men; that of the Union Army at 12,410 men.

Major Steele says of the Antietam campaign,

\* Henderson, *Life of Jackson*, Vol. II, pp. 322-3. The above account was given by Gen. Stephen D. Lee, an eyewitness.



Lee had only 55,000 men,\* with little hope of reinforcements; while McClellan had nearly 90,000 with strong reinforcements on the way.—*American Campaigns*, p. 280.

The same accomplished critic further says:

From beginning to end of the campaign the Confederate commander's conduct was characterized by boldness, resolution, and quickness.—*Id.*, p. 283.

To another, and a crucial, example of the audacity of the soul of Lee let us now briefly advert. We refer to the daring strategy which he employed at the battle of Chancellorsville, where he stood with 15,000 men, under Anderson and McLaws, facing Hooker's great army of 73,000 while Jackson with 22,600 men made his great flank march to fall upon the right wing of Hooker. What glorious audacity it was! Unjustifiable, perhaps some will say,—contrary to sound principles of war. Yes, but Lee was a law unto himself in the art of war. He knew the maxims of the approved masters of strategy and he applied them; but there came crises when he rode straight over them to attain his ends. He acknowledged that he took fearful risks, but under the conditions that sometimes encompassed him it was often true that the only hope of success lay in taking desperate chances.

We cannot write of Chancellorsville without pausing a moment at the mention of Stonewall Jackson,

\* But actually in the firing lines Lee had not more than 35,000 as stated above.

whose name will forever be associated with the great Confederate victory there. If ever there was a double star in the firmament of military glory, it was in the case of these two great soldiers. Their name and fame will ever be closely intertwined,—so closely that we can hardly think of or understand the achievements of the one without the other,—so closely that when the historian turns the telescope of his observation upon the one, he always sees the other by his side,—so closely that the glory of the one on the battlefield is constantly mingled with the glory of the other; and thus we see them, as at 2d Manassas and at Chancellorsville, not as two illustrious leaders, and strategists, but as one—a true binary star in the firmament of history.

Lee's confidence in Jackson was unbounded. Jackson's opinion of Lee is seen in his well-known declaration that "Lee is a phenomenon. He is the only man whom I would follow blindfold." When Jackson was wounded Lee wrote him:

Could I have directed events, I should have chosen for the good of the country to have been disabled in your stead. I congratulate you on the victory, which is due to your skill and energy.

When this was read to him, Jackson said,

Better that ten Jacksons should fall than one Lee.

And when Lee heard Jackson was worse, he said,

Tell him that I am praying for him as I believe I never prayed for myself.

There was another deed of daring inspired by the soul of Lee at Chancellorsville which is sometimes overlooked. At 10 A.M. on the third day of the conflict, after Jackson had fallen, the army of Lee which was preparing an assault on Hooker's third line of entrenchments—a blow which must have been fatal to the Federal Army,—was arrested by the news that Sedgwick had captured Marye's heights at Fredericksburg and was marching with his 25,000 men on Lee's rear.

This was disquieting news indeed. Lee had intended that Early should interpose between him and Sedgwick. Instead, Early had retreated on the Plank road in the direction of Richmond. Thus he had become separated from Lee, and could render him no assistance. It was a critical moment; the battle was not yet won. On the contrary, it might easily be turned into defeat for Lee, with Hooker in his front and Sedgwick in his rear.

But the genius of Lee was equal to the emergency. He resolved on a movement "even more daring," says the Comte de Paris, "than that which the day previous had brought Jackson upon the flank of the enemy." Suspending his attack on Hooker, he turned with McLaws' and Anderson's divisions, advanced swiftly against Sedgwick, attacked him, and drove him back over the river.

By general consent the battle of Chancellorsville is acknowledged the most brilliant of all Lee's achievements. By his consummate strategy and by the celerity, skill and audacity with which Jackson coop-

erated with his plans, he was able with an army of not more than 57,000 men of all arms to foil and hurl back staggering and broken Hooker's splendid army which Swinton, the Northern historian, estimates at 132,000 men. Col. Charles Marshall of his staff thus describes the climax of the victory on the third day:

"In the midst of this scene General Lee, mounted on that horse which we all remember so well, rode to the front of his advancing battalions. His presence was the signal for one of those uncontrollable outbursts of enthusiasm which none can appreciate who have not witnessed them. The fierce soldiers, with their faces blackened with the smoke of battle, the wounded, crawling with feeble limbs from the fury of the devouring flames, all seemed possessed with a common impulse. One long, unbroken cheer, in which the feeble cry of those who lay helpless on the earth blended with the strong voices of those who still fought, rose high above the roar of the battle, and hailed the presence of the victorious chief. He sat in the full realization of all that soldier's dream of—triumph."\*

The careful study of this one battle is sufficient to justify Col. Henderson's opinion that Lee was "undoubtedly one of the greatest, if not the greatest soldier, who ever spoke the English tongue."

We may compare with this English soldier's words, those of Theodore Roosevelt in his *Life of Benton* (p. 38). "Lee will undoubtedly rank as without any

\* Quoted by Miss E. Mason in her *Life of Lee*, p. 361.

exception the greatest of all the great captains that the English-speaking people have brought forth."

The battle of Gettysburg, following Chancellorsville at an interval of only two months, will occur to every student of Lee's campaigns as a vivid illustration of his characteristic aggressiveness both in strategy and tactics. He took the offensive on each of the three days of battle—only failing at last to win a decisive victory for two reasons,—first by the lack of coordination in the attacks made by his commanders, and second, by the strange failure of his chief lieutenants to carry out his orders promptly and exactly. While his conduct of this battle has been severely criticised it is acknowledged by some of the most competent critics, such as Hunt and Henderson and Battine, that had his orders been carried out he should have achieved an overwhelming success. "There can be no doubt," says Capt. Battine, "that a prompt employment of all his available resources would have placed victory within Lee's grasp."

He further says, "There can be no doubt that the opportunity was the brightest the Confederates had made for themselves since they let McClellan escape from the banks of the Chickahominy."

Chas. Francis Adams pronounces the campaign "timely, admirably designed, energetically executed, and brought to a close with consummate military skill." Henderson says Lee lost the battle of Gettysburg not by his defective strategy, or his errors of tactics, but because he suffered his second in command to argue instead of marching.

The great assault delivered against the Union center on the third day was one of the most daring enterprises in the history of war, and exhibits that splendid audacity that marked Lee's whole career as a soldier from his service under Scott in Mexico to the day when he yielded to the inevitable and surrendered the remnant of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox. Nor was it a reckless or unreasoned daring. The condition of the Federal Army after its severe losses and the impairment of its morale on the first two days of the conflict, coupled with the splendid courage and indomitable resolution of the soldiers of Lee justified the expectation of success; and had the glorious charge been made in the morning as ordered; and had it been supported as it might, and could, and should have been—in other words, had not the orders of the commanding general been disobeyed,—there is little doubt that the Federal Army would have been cut in twain, and driven in disaster from the field.

It was not the plan of Gen. Lee that that column of 12,000 men should have been thrown unsupported against that formidable position. His order was that the divisions of Hood and McLaws should have advanced in support of Pickett and that Pettigrew and Anderson should also have cooperated.\* Most certainly it was not the intention of this great commander that four-fifths of his army should have looked idly on while one-fifth charged into the jaws of death.

\* See Long's *Memoirs of Lee*, p. 294.

The failure of Gen. Ewell to seize Cemetery Hill on the afternoon of the first day's battle has new light shed upon it by an incident recounted in the following extract of a letter addressed to the author by Major W. A. Anderson, of Lexington, Virginia, February 10, 1916:

"What you say about General Ewell's fatal inaction on the afternoon and evening of July 1st is fully confirmed by what Doctor Samuel B. Morrison told me in his lifetime.

"Doctor Morrison was a surgeon of high rank in Ewell's Corps. His statement to me a number of years ago was as follows:

"On the afternoon of the 1st of July, 1863, Dr. Morrison received a summons to go to Gen. Ewell, who he was informed had been wounded. He found Gen. Ewell lying by the roadside near the Town of Gettysburg attended by some members of his staff.

"Dr. Morrison dismounted and approached Gen. Ewell, remarking, 'General, I hope you are not badly hurt.' To which the General replied, 'Doctor, I have a compound communicated fracture of my leg,'—and then, after a brief pause, adding with a twinkle in his eyes,—'but it is my *wooden* leg.'

"The Doctor told me he found Gen. Ewell very pale, and on taking his pulse, and examining his condition, he discovered that he was 'suffering from shock,' but was not seriously injured by the blow from a fragment of a shell (I think it was) which had shattered his wooden leg, and doubtless painfully bruised the stump of that amputated limb.

“ Dr. Morrison’s examination of the General soon satisfied him that any injury he had received was slight, and he told Gen. Ewell that he was ‘all right,’ and would in a little while entirely rally from the slight shock from the shattering of his wooden leg.

“ Dr. Morrison remained with Gen. Ewell for some little time, how long he did not inform me.

“ While he was still there, Col. Walter H. Taylor, of Gen. Lee’s staff, rode up, and saluted Gen. Ewell, and after learning that he was not seriously hurt delivered the following message from Gen. Lee, as nearly as I can recall Dr. Morrison’s language:

‘ General,—General Lee desires me to present you his compliments, and to express his hope that you will see your way clear to press the pursuit of the enemy who seem to be retreating in disorder.’

“ In some such language Col. Taylor communicated Gen. Lee’s views and wish to Gen. Ewell.

“ Gen. Ewell made some courteous but not entirely definite reply, and Col. Taylor rode off.

“ After a little while, however, Gen. Ewell remarked to the members of his staff and other officers about him as follows:

“ ‘ My boys have had a long and hard day. They have had nothing to eat since the early morning, and are hungry, hot and tired. I will let them get something to eat and a rest tonight, and we will take the enemy before breakfast in the morning.’

“ Dr. Morrison’s account of the occurrence referred to was given me some time, several years perhaps, before Col. Walter Taylor’s book was published in



in which there is an account of the same memorable incident."

This narrative, never published before, explains Ewell's failure to seize Cemetery Hill, so easily within his grasp that afternoon. The shock which he received, and the painful bruising of his amputated limb, was in all probability responsible for his fatal postponement of the attack which would have given the Confederates the hill and with it victory at Gettysburg.\*

We may pause a moment at this point to ask the reader to recall a battle which bears some striking resemblances and contrasts to the battle of Gettysburg, the battle of Solferino. It was fought June 24, 1859, only three years before. Not since Leipsig in 1813 had such a stupendous conflict taken place. About 270,000 men were engaged, the Austrians having nearly 130,000, the French and Piedmontese almost 139,000. The losses were appalling. All Europe stood aghast at the carnage. Napoleon III was overwhelmed as he rode over the field the next day and witnessed the frightful scenes of death and agony. And yet the killed and wounded at Gettys-

\* Major Steele says of Gettysburg, "On the morning of the 2d of July Lee had on the ground thirty-three brigades—all of his infantry except four brigades. At seven o'clock Meade had thirty-nine brigades, at nine o'clock forty-one, and at 12 o'clock forty-three. On the morning of the 3d, after Pickett had come up with his division, Lee had only thirty-seven brigades; Meade had fifty-one brigades."—*American Campaigns*, I, 390.

burg were more in number than at Solferino, while the aggregate of the Union and Confederate Armies was more than one-third smaller than the forces engaged in the famous Italian battlefield,—about 170,000 at Gettysburg,—about 270,000 at Solferino.

As to the question, “Was Gettysburg a Federal victory!” it may be sufficient to quote the words of Gen. Meade in a letter to his wife, “I never claimed a victory, though I stated that Lee was defeated in his efforts to destroy my army.”—*Life and Letters*, vol. 2, p. 133.\*

The Wilderness campaign of 1864 furnishes yet another example of the aggressive daring which was the most striking characteristic of the strategy and the tactics of Lee.

Facing Grant's Army of 140,000 men (see the Report of the Secretary of War to the 39th Congress, vol. I, 1865-6, pp. 3-5, 55) with barely 64,000 men of all arms,—under which circumstances a commander whose genius inclined to defensive strategy

\* The author invites particular attention to the discussion in the Appendix of this much misunderstood campaign. It is there shown we think, conclusively, that Gen. Ewell's failure to seize Cemetery Hill, as Lee directed, on the first day of the battle,—Gen. Longstreet's inexcusable delay in his attack on the second day,—and the same officer's double departure from the orders of his chief on the third day,—were responsible for the loss of a great victory. Lee's genius did not fail in his plan of battle, nor was his strategy at fault. The failure was in the execution of his plan by his subordinates.

would naturally manœuvre to avoid a general engagement,—Lee did not hesitate to pursue a policy the very reverse of Fabian. Owing to Longstreet's unnecessary failure to arrive on the battle front May 5th, Lee gave orders to Ewell and Hill not to bring on a general engagement, but to oppose the passage of the Union Army. Two divisions, 15,000 strong, heroically resisted five Union divisions, 45,000 strong, and completely foiled their repeated assaults.\* But next morning the divisions of Heth and Wilcox were overpowered and compelled to retire before Longstreet could put his corps into the fight. It was then that Lee, seeing the threat of disaster, dashed among the fugitives and personally appealed to them to rally. His presence as he rode along the lines was most inspiring. Then, Longstreet having arrived and put his troops into battle, Lee put himself at the head of the Texans as they bravely advanced to save the day; but the soldiers cried out to him to "go to the rear," promising to restore the line and drive the enemy back. It was done. The Confederate advance was irresistible. This was the first of three occasions in the Wilderness campaign that Lee undertook to lead his charging columns in person, viz., on May 6th, 10th, and 12th.† Thus no sooner had Grant with his immense army, outnumbering the

\* See Taylor's *Four Years with General Lee*, p. 127, First Edition.

† See for May 6th, Alexander's *Memoirs*, p. 503; for May 10th, Taylor's *Four Years with Lee*, p. 130; for May 12th, Gordon's *Reminiscences*, p. 278.

Confederate commander much more than two to one (140,000 to 64,000), crossed the Rapidan and plunged into the tangled maze of the wilderness, than Lee boldly advanced and struck him two staggering blows on the same day, May 6th, one at 11 A.M. under the leadership of Longstreet, as just mentioned, the other under Gordon at 6 P.M. The first was an attack on Grant's right flank by four of Longstreet's brigades. The success was complete.

"Brigade after brigade was routed and rolled up." In vain did the brave Hancock strive to stay the panic. Longstreet with five fresh brigades was ready to follow it up by a frontal attack and drive the Federals into the Rapidan. Two full corps had already been utterly routed. The rout of the rest of the army seemed assured when these five brigades should be unleashed. Longstreet was already receiving congratulations when, at the critical moment, he fell severely wounded by the fire of his own men—just as Jackson had fallen almost exactly a year before, and near the same spot, while victoriously executing a similar movement!

The second blow which Lee gave Grant on that 6th day of May was delivered by Gen. John B. Gordon a little before sundown, and was directed against the right of the Federal Army, under the direction of Gen. Lee himself. It was immediately and splendidly successful, and the news of it carried consternation to Grant's headquarters' staff and the soul of Grant himself; but night prevented the consummation of the defeat; and saved the Federal Army.

Had it not been for the stubborn and unreasoning opposition of Gen. Early, this assault would have been made early in the day, in which case overwhelming disaster would have overtaken Gen. Grant.

Referring to this blow delivered by Gen. Gordon, Major Gen. James Harrison Wilson, who was very close to Gen. Grant, tells us in his book *Under the Old Flag*, vol. I, p. 390, that an officer who had been with Grant through the whole war and "had seen him in every battle," stated to him that the news from the right "gave the impression that an overwhelming disaster had befallen our line," and that as officer after officer came in with additional details, it became apparent "that the General was confronted by the greatest crisis of his life." It was a disaster "which threatened to overwhelm his army and put an end to his career." Gen. Wilson adds that "both Rawlins and Bowers concurred in the statement that Grant went into his tent, and throwing himself face downward on his cot, gave way to the greatest emotion." And they added that "not till it became apparent that the enemy was not pressing his advantage did he entirely recover his perfect composure."\*

The facts thus briefly recalled show how essentially offensive was the military genius of Lee. In this Wilderness campaign, as it is called, from the Rapidan River to Richmond, although Lee's *strategy* was

\* He further says "it was an episode of terrible import followed by a night of anxiety which none of us will ever forget."  
—p. 387.

wisely defensive, yet his *tactics* were in many cases boldly offensive. Indeed, as military critics have been free to acknowledge, his tactics were consistently offensive up to the very day of the surrender at Appomattox.

As to his defensive strategy in this campaign of the Wilderness a high authority has said, "In this only a few of his detractors have seen evidence of failing courage. Actually, it is only another exhibition of his genius which enabled him to see that the day for those tactics was passed. His unerring perception told him that his only chance lay in wearing out his enemy, and he would not be tempted into a false move."\*

And now finally another example of Lee's boldness in offensive strategy. Right in the midst of his death grapple with Grant before Petersburg, he despatches Gen. Early to the Valley of Virginia with a division taken from his little army in the trenches, with orders to cross the Potomac, threaten Washington, and "insult with the fires of his bivouacs the Capital City."

\* Referring to Longstreet's failure to arrive on the Wilderness field May 5th, one of the critics remarks, "Longstreet was behindhand again, but through no fault of his." This is an error. Had Longstreet taken the right road (4 P.M. June 4th) he should easily have arrived by the afternoon, or noon, of the 5th, having only twenty miles to march. Lee had sent an officer "to stay with him and show him the roads," but Longstreet discharged him, and so took the wrong road, "consuming a day and a half of precious time."—*Life of Gen. Lee* by Fitzhugh Lee, p. 331.

V

LEE AS A MASTER OF DEFENSIVE  
STRATEGY

*Napoleon's seventy-third maxim says:*

*"The first qualification in a general-in-chief is a cool head—that is a head which receives just impressions, and estimates things and objects at their real value. He must not allow himself to be elated by good news, or depressed by bad."*

*"This campaign alone would entitle him to the high place he justly holds among the great Commanders of the world."—Col. Livermore.*

*"The mighty campaign of 1864 before Richmond was as much a masterpiece of defensive warfare as Napoleon's campaign of 1814."—Capt. Cecil Battine.*



## V

### LEE AS A MASTER OF DEFENSIVE STRATEGY

Lee was skilful in the use of the shield as well as of the sword. His campaigns furnish some of the most brilliant examples of defensive strategy and tactics to be found in the history of war. Of these the battle of Fredericksburg is a striking instance. On December 11 and 12, 1862, Gen. Burnside crossed the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg, and prepared to assault the Confederate lines. Eyewitnesses describe the scene presented by the Army of the Potomac on the morning of the 13th as an imposing and glorious spectacle. It was, by the testimony of its commander, 100,000 strong, and as it advanced in solid ranks, with colors flying and drums beating and the sun glittering on its bayonets, it presented a panorama at once beautiful and terrible.

But Lee had skilfully selected his defensive lines, and these had been protected by hastily erected earthworks. Such was the strength of the position and such the skill with which the artillery was handled, and such the steadiness of the Southern infantry that terrible havoc was wrought in the ranks of the brave Federal Army. Gallantly they advanced, not once but over and over again, now on the right, now on the left; but their gallantry was all to no

purpose. Those fine divisions of brave Americans were shattered and at last demoralized by the deadly Confederate fire—and the battle of Fredericksburg went into history a splendid proof of Lee's genius in defensive warfare. Of the 78,000 men of all arms under his command a large proportion was not actively engaged. The Confederate losses were a little over 5000; those of the Federals over 12,600. Burnside's entire force present for duty on December 10th, in the three grand divisions, was 118,952.

The most supreme example of Lee's genius in defensive strategy and tactics is seen in the campaign against Grant in 1864, culminating in the long and bitterly contested siege of Petersburg. Though strategically defensive it was often tactically offensive. Attention may be briefly focussed upon some of the remarkable features of this long and terrific struggle. Lee was grappling with Grant with an army less than half the size of his. It was 64,000 against 140,000. To this superiority in numbers was added a great superiority in munitions and equipment and artillery. Moreover, the Union commander had at his disposal scientific helps which were quite lacking to Lee. His signal system was very perfect. "At every halt of the army telegraphic wires were laid along the whole line so that in a short time after encamping each corps and division was connected by a telegraphic network, making of the whole extended army a single body under instant control of the commander through these outstretching iron nerves."

Consider also the extraordinary features of the region where these sanguinary battles took place. The Wilderness where the two armies closed in a death grapple three days (May 4-7) was a jungle of tangled brushwood so dense that the men were invisible to each other at half musket range. It was "a region of gloom and the shadow of death." So dense was the thicket that both cavalry and artillery were almost useless—it was a battle of the infantry alone. Sometimes their volleys set fire to the woods, or even the breastworks, which would become a mass of seething fire.

And now see with what consummate skill Lee met and foiled Grant at every turn. It was the Union commander's constant effort to march by the flank and place his army between Lee and Richmond, but notwithstanding his immense superiority in numbers, he was never able to accomplish this, nor to break permanently through the Confederate lines, though he constantly assailed them with great skill and determination. At the close of the three days tremendous struggle in the Wilderness Grant had failed in his objective, and his losses had been more than 20,000. Lee, too, had lost heavily—7750 men (Livermore's estimate), but his veteran army was unshaken, and still stoutly barred Grant's way.

Then the Union commander made a rapid night march to Spottsylvania C. H.—only to find that Lee had anticipated his move and was there in force before him,—to the great surprise of the general in command.

Lee's army should surely have been fifteen miles in the rear! Instead, there it was right across Grant's line of advance to Richmond! The Confederate chieftain by bold and skilful strategy had marched quite around the Army of the Potomac, and stood ready to receive its assaults. These were not slow in developing and were delivered with that immense energy which characterized Gen. Grant. On the 10th of May two assaults were directed against Lee's lines,—at 10 A.M. and again at 3 P.M.—only to meet a bloody repulse. These were, however, only preliminary to the main assault at 5 P.M. which also was repulsed with enormous loss. But still the iron will of the Union commander would not accept defeat. He organized a fourth attack which was hurled back with even greater loss. When the day closed between 5000 and 6000 Union soldiers lay dead and wounded on the field, while the Confederate loss was comparatively small. Both armies had fought with splendid courage. Only at one point had success attended the Federal attacks. Part of Ewell's line was broken by Sedgwick, and the affair might have resulted in serious disaster had not Lee put himself at the head of the counter-charging column, and so inspired the men that they rushed to the attack with such irresistible élan that the works were speedily retaken, and impending disaster averted.

Another partial success was achieved on the 12th of May when Hancock, aided by the darkness of the night and a thick fog in the early morning, broke through Lee's lines, capturing Major General

Johnson and his entire division with about twenty pieces of artillery. It was a desperate moment for the Confederate Army,—it had been cut in twain—and again disaster was averted by the personal valor of Lee, who rode to the head of the column that was rushed forward to recover the lost line, but was “ordered to the rear” by Gen. Gordon and his gallant men. Terrible was the battle that followed and that raged from daylight until dark, but at last the Union soldiers were compelled to give up the contest. Ten thousand of them had fallen on that fateful day. Swinton, the Northern historian, thus describes the struggle at the bloody salient:

Of all the struggles of the war, this was perhaps the fiercest and most deadly. Frequently throughout the conflict, so close was the fight that the rival standards were planted on opposite sides of the breastworks. The enemies' most savage sallies were directed to retake the famous salient, which was now become an angle of death and presented a spectacle ghastly and terrible. On the Confederate side of the works lay many corpses of those who had been bayoneted by Hancock's men when they first leaped the entrenchments. To these were constantly added the bravest of those who, in the assaults to recapture the position, fell at the margin of the works till the ground was literally covered with piles of dead and the woods in front of the salient were one hideous Golgotha.

Gen. Grant had sent eight brigades to the Angle at 8 A.M. The men stood in the narrow area from 20 to 40 deep, and the rear lines passed their guns rapidly to those in front. So tremendous was the fire that the entire forest was killed. An oak tree 22 inches in

diameter was cut down by musketry fire. Its trunk is still preserved in Washington. The bodies of the wounded and slain fallen in the earlier attacks were shot to pieces. So ended the bloody series of encounters at and around Spottsylvania Court House. And now again on May 20th Grant resolves on a flank movement; but Lee discovers it, and when the Union commander reaches his objective near Hanover Junction on the 23d he finds it occupied by Lee in a position of great strength. Says the historian of the Army of the Potomac, "The game of war seldom presents a more effectual checkmate than was here given by Lee."

Passing over other flank movements of Gen. Grant—always met and foiled by Lee, often because he divined rather than discovered them—we come to the bloodiest battle of the whole campaign, that of Cold Harbor. The strength of the two armies was now as follows, each having been reinforced: Lee, 45,000 men; Grant (with Butler), 112,000. We shall not describe the battle that ensued. Suffice it to say that a simultaneous assault was made on the Confederate lines by the Union Army—and everywhere with the same result. "Rank after rank was swept away until the column of assault was almost annihilated."

One Confederate commander, General Hoke, reported that the ground of his entire front was literally covered with the dead and wounded, and that, up to that time, he had not had a single man killed. Grant's columns were composed of brave men, but

when he ordered the assault renewed they sullenly refused to advance. "No man stirred," says Swinton, "and the immobile lines pronounced a verdict, silent, yet emphatic against further slaughter." No wonder, for in one hour on that disastrous 3d of June, 13,000 Union soldiers had fallen before the deadly Confederate fire.\*

Major Steele in his *American Campaigns*, vol. I, p. 504, justly remarks, "If the student looks for anything brilliant of strategy or tactics, in Gen. Grant's operations in this campaign, he will look in vain. Lee anticipated every movement the Union Army made and took prompt steps to meet it."

Of his great antagonist he says, "This was the first campaign in which Lee was reduced to a strictly strategic defensive. After the battle of the Wilderness he never felt strong enough to assume the strategic offensive. Tactically, however, parts of his army acted on the offensive in every battle up to and including Cold Harbor; and as will be seen in the next lecture, almost up to the day of his surrender at Appomattox."—(*Id.* p. 500).

Thus ended this extraordinary campaign covering a period of one month, in which time Lee's incomparable army had put *hors de combat* of the army under Grant a number of men almost equal to its own entire strength when the campaign began on the 4th of May. The Union losses aggregated 60,000;

\* This is Swinton's estimate. Gen. Alexander puts the loss at 7,000.

Lee's loss was about 20,000. No wonder that there is a general chorus of admiration among military critics for Lee's achievements in these operations. We have space for but one quotation:

"Lee," says Capt. Cecil Battine, "had emerged triumphant from a campaign which is surpassed by no other in gallant fighting and skilful direction. Even the glories of the campaigns of France in 1814, and Frederick's wonderful defiance of his enemies in the Seven Years' War, pale before Lee's astonishing performance; for neither Napoleon till he met Wellington, nor Frederick at any time, was opposed to such a dangerous enemy as Grant."\*

It should be noted that the Confederates were nearer success at this juncture than at any time during the war. "So gloomy was the outlook, after the action on the Chickahominy," says Swinton, "and to such a degree, by consequence, had the public mind become relaxed, that there was at this time great danger of a collapse of the war."—(p. 494).†

"Grant's campaign," says Steele, "as far southward as the Chickahominy had been one of tactical defeats, with heavy losses, which carried sorrow home to every part of the land; the last battle, Cold Harbor, was the costliest repulse the Union Army had suffered; the morale of Lee's Army was as good

\* *The Crisis of the Confederacy*, p. 382.

† There is a story resting on excellent authority which, if made public, will remarkably confirm Mr. Swinton's statement above.



as ever." Why then did the government at Washington persevere with the war? The answer does not admit of doubt. The success of Farragut in Mobile Bay; Hood's defeat by Sherman before Atlanta in August; and Sheridan's victories in the Shenandoah in September;—these were the events which neutralized Lee's success in the campaign of 1864. It may therefore be said with much truth that the war was won for the South in the East, but lost in the Southwest.



VI

THE SIEGE OF PETERSBURG

*“In the case of Lee we admire much that was Napoleonic in the conception of his plans.”—Count Yorck von Wartenburg.*

*“The greatest general of the day.”—Col. Livermore.*

*“Lee stands out as one of the greatest soldiers of all time.”—Col. Henderson.*

*“As Hannibal, notwithstanding Zama, towers over the very inferior Scipio, the figure of Lee eclipses Grant.”—Colonel Chesney.*

## VI

### THE SIEGE OF PETERSBURG

The crossing of the James River by Gen. Grant after the close of the Wilderness campaign, and the transfer of his whole army to the front of Petersburg, June 15-17, 1864, was a remarkable performance,—a bold and successful piece of strategy. On this one occasion he certainly outmanœuvred Lee, who, for three days, refused to believe that the thing had been done.

Alexander, the chief of artillery of Longstreet's corps, is of opinion that had Lee discovered the movement of Grant, and sent Longstreet to man the entrenchments at Petersburg, "it is not too much to claim that Grant's defeat would have been not less bloody and disastrous than was the one at Cold Harbor." "Grant here escaped a second defeat more bloody and more overwhelming than any preceding. Thus the last, and perhaps the best, chances of Confederate success were not lost in the repulse at Gettysburg, nor in any combat of arms. They were lost in three days lying in camp, believing that Grant was hemmed in by the broad part of the James below City Point and had nowhere to go but to come and attack us."\*

\* *Military Memoirs*, p. 547.

Major Steele is of opinion that this movement of Grant's must be reckoned, "in conception and execution, among the very finest achievements of strategy to be found in our military history."\*

Now begins the long siege of Petersburg. It lasted nine months, from June 15, 1864, to April 1, 1865. The one advantage which Lee had was that he operated on interior lines, but in everything else, except military genius, he was at a great disadvantage, yet in spite of his inferior numbers he met successfully every movement of his powerful and resourceful antagonist, on his right or left flank or his center, to the very last.

The story of this siege cannot be told in these pages. All through the Wilderness campaign both armies protected themselves by breastworks. But now a new phase of warfare was developed, which may be considered the germ of the vast trench system employed at the present time by the armies in Europe. Grant caused high, bastioned works to be erected, and these made the Union lines so formidable that they were practically unassailable, and enabled the commander to hold them safely with a small force, while throwing the bulk of his army on some chosen point of attack in Lee's line.

A word may be said of the mine driven under the Confederate works and exploded on the morning of July 30th. A main gallery had been constructed 510 feet long, with lateral galleries in which eight

\* *Military Memoirs*, p. 529.

magazines were placed, containing a charge of 8000 pounds of powder. It was cleverly planned and skilfully and scientifically executed by the Federal engineers.

The explosion was to be the signal for a grand assault along the whole line by infantry and cavalry also. A little before 5 A.M. the fuse was lighted. "Then the earth trembled and heaved, and cannon, caissons, sandbags and men went up into the air with the tremendous explosion, leaving an enormous hole in the ground, 175 feet long, 60 feet wide, 30 feet deep, filled with dust, great blocks of clay, guns, broken gun carriages, projecting timbers, and men buried up to their necks, others to their waists, and some with only their feet and legs protruding from the earth."

But great as was the success of the mine, the Confederates quickly rallied under the eye of Lee himself and the "Battle of the Crater" which ensued resulted in a brilliant success for the Southern Army. The Crater was crowded with Union troops who in the end raised the white flag and surrendered. Gen. Grant says it promised to be the most successful assault of the campaign, but terminated in disaster, though 50,000 troops stood ready to support it. Of this siege Col. Archer Anderson says, "The Confederate commander displayed every art by which genius and courage can make good the lack of numbers and resources. But the increasing misfortunes of the Confederate arms in other theatres of war gradually cut off the supply of men and means. The Army of

Northern Virginia ceased to be recruited, it ceased to be adequately fed. It lived for months on less than one-third rations. It was demoralized not by the enemy in its front, but by the enemy in Georgia and the Carolinas. It dwindled to 35,000 men holding a front of 35 miles; but over the enemy it still cast the shadow of its great name." Gen. Grant continued to press the siege with great energy and with dogged perseverance. He could afford to persevere when he saw the army of Lee growing weaker with every conflict, and its supplies steadily exhausted. The opinion of an accomplished officer of the United States may here be quoted:

"In the long siege of Petersburg, Lee had the advantage of interior lines of operation and of a better knowledge of the intricate wooded country and cross roads. He made such good use of his advantages as to meet every movement of his enemy to right or left, up to the very last, with a force large enough to stop him. Not until Lee's line of works had stretched to more than 35 miles, with only about 1000 men to the mile to hold it, and Sheridan's larger force of cavalry was threatening his only line of supply and retreat, was Lee driven back from his outer line of entrenchments and forced to flee with his army."\*

The same authority bears the following testimony as to the Army of Northern Virginia at the end of the Wilderness campaign: "The morale of Lee's Army was as good as ever."

\* *American Campaigns*, Major M. F. Steele, 1909.



Lee on his part bravely and skilfully met and often foiled his powerful antagonist. Gen. A. P. Hill severely defeated Gen. Hancock when the latter attempted to seize the Weldon railroad, capturing colors and guns and over 3000 stands of small arms besides 2150 prisoners. His loss was about 700 men, Hancock's 2370. But such successes made no change in Grant's tactics. He kept up the hammering process, now at one point, now at another.

Having failed in his attacks so far on the South side of the James, he now assaulted Lee's lines on the Richmond side of the river, and though successful at Fort Harrison, he met a bloody repulse at Fort Gilmer.

For eight months after the battle of the Crater the heroic Confederate chieftain held his lines before Petersburg, but as winter drew on his difficulties became more and more overwhelming. He saw his brave veterans suffering in the trenches from cold and hunger and insufficient food and clothing, and do what he would he could not relieve them. "In some regiments," he wrote Mrs. Lee, "only 50 men have shoes, and bacon is issued only once in a few days." In visiting the lines late in the evening he found a sentry on duty without any trousers. When questioned he said he only had one pair and they were much worn, so he kept them to wear in the daytime. It was about that time that he advocated enlisting negro troops.

What a tragic spectacle it is—the struggle of that heroic soul against the fate that was relentlessly

closing in upon him! The dark shadows of impending disaster were falling across his pathway as the New Year of 1865 dawned on the South. January 15th Fort Fisher falls—and the ports of the Confederacy are hermetically sealed! Then come the tidings that Sherman has reached Savannah! By March 23d he is at Goldsboro, N. C., only 150 miles from Petersburg.

But Lee and his heroic little army have no thought but to stand firmly in their lines, grimly resisting to the last. On the 9th of February he had been made Commander-in-chief of the Confederate Armies—an empty honor at that desperate stage of the great game of war! However, he at once issued a general order exhorting the soldiers of the South to renewed devotion and sacrifice, saying:

“Let us oppose constancy to adversity, fortitude to suffering, and courage to danger, with the firm assurance that He who gave freedom to our fathers will bless the efforts of their children to preserve it.”

Other efforts too he made. We find him appealing to the farmers to send in supplies for provisioning the army in its great straits. Later he issued a circular to the citizens asking them to contribute saddles, revolvers, pistols, carbines for the cavalry. To Mrs. Lee about this time he writes:

“I pray we may not be overwhelmed. I shall, however, endeavor to do my duty and fight to the last.”

One more heroic effort Lee resolved upon, the assault on Fort Stedman, which, had it succeeded, would

have broken the center of Grant's Army. It met with initial success under Gordon's splendid leadership, and might have accomplished its object had the supporting column been in time, but it was not, and the daring enterprise ended in failure and severe loss.

Even on the eve of the evacuation of Petersburg, on March 31st, Lee essayed a daring offensive—making a swift attack with about 17,000 men upon Grant's exposed flank while marching through a swampy forest.

Once more Lee's resourceful genius flared forth in his dispositions for the battle of Five Forks, on April 1st, where a great success should have been achieved but for Major-Gen. Pickett's absence from the field of battle till the day was lost. That officer was soon after relieved from duty with the Army of Northern Virginia. We shall have more to say of Five Forks in our next chapter, and also of the tragic retreat, begun April 2d, and ending with Appomattox April 9th.

We may here say a few words of Lee's place as a strategist and as a commander among the great soldiers of history. At the outset one thing is clear,—his fame has been waxing greater and greater during the last half century. General Grant's estimate of him as "a fair commander," "of a slow, cautious nature without imagination or humor," finds no echo among military experts in Europe or America today. That General further said, "I never could see in his achievements what justified his reputation. The

illusion that heavy odds beat him will not stand the ultimate light of history. I know it is not true. Lee was a good deal of a headquarters general . . . almost too old for active service.”\*

What Gen. Grant could not see (if Young has correctly reported him) is plain to the eyes of the great body of military men today whose judgment would really count. For instance, Major-Gen. Sir Frederick B. Maurice, chief director of military operations at the War Office of the British Army, has recently told us that the commanders of the great armies now at deadly grip in Europe are following the same strategical principles laid down by Napoleon and Lee.

Count Yorck von Wartenburg in his brilliant work on the Campaigns of Napoleon (published in 1902) says, “In the case of Lee we admire much that was Napoleonic in the conception of his plans.” Col. Chas. Cornwallis Chesney of the British Army says, “Like Napoleon, Lee’s troops soon learned to believe him equal to every emergency that war could bring.”

Capt. Cecil Battine, of the King’s Hussars, in his brilliant work *The Crisis of the Confederacy* says, “The mighty campaign of 1864 before Richmond was as much a masterpiece of defensive warfare as Napoleon’s campaign of 1814” (p. 307). And again he writes, referring to the final action of June 17th and 18th before Petersburg, “Lee had emerged triumphant from a campaign which is surpassed by no

\* Mr. Gamaliel Bradford tells us that Grant never said anything in commendation of Lee’s military ability.

other in gallant fighting and skilful direction. Even the glories of the Campaign of France, in 1814, and Frederick's wonderful defiance of his enemies in the Seven Years' War, pale before Lee's astonishing performance; for neither Napoleon till he met Wellington, nor Frederick at any time, was opposed to such a dangerous enemy as Grant."—(*Id.*, p. 380).

And yet again, "In the boldness and sagacity of his strategy, he resembled Napoleon himself."—(*Id.*, p. 114).

Col. Henderson also, the accomplished author of the *Life of Stonewall Jackson*, commenting on the campaign against Pope says, "Lee stands out as one of the greatest soldiers of all times."—II, 231.

And again he gives it as his opinion that "Lee was undoubtedly one of the greatest, if not the greatest, soldier who ever spoke the English tongue."—(*Science of War*, p. 314).

Lord Wolseley's opinion of Lee as "the ablest general he had ever met," is well known,—and he had met von Moltke, who by the way held Lee the equal of Wellington.

It has been remarked that the most recent foreign critics, while recognizing the mistakes which Lee undoubtedly made—and, as a distinguished general once remarked, the commander "who has never made mistakes has never made war"—yet unite in the highest praise of his military genius.

Let it also be said that not the least enthusiastic praise of Lee's strategy has fallen from the lips or the pens of Northern military writers. For example, Col.

W. R. Livermore is of opinion that "if Grant in the spring of 1864 had come to the Army of Northern Virginia and Lee to the Army of the Potomac, it is not impossible that the war would have ended then and there," and that "this campaign alone would entitle him to the high place he justly holds among the great commanders of the world." Again he calls him "the greatest general of the day."

Other Union officers might be quoted who express the highest admiration for Lee's genius in war,—but the most remarkable is that of Col. Eben Swift, of the General Staff of the United States, in a paper read before the American Historical Society in 1910, who writes, "The odds of numbers were greater against Lee in the Wilderness campaign than against Napoleon in the Waterloo campaign. But Lee had his army at the end and Napoleon's disaster was complete. In the Wilderness campaign Lee inflicted losses in killed and wounded almost as great as the army he commanded. Lee made five campaigns in a single year; no other man and no other army ever did as much. . . . Lee practiced his own theory of the art of war. Although indebted to Napoleon, he treated each problem as a concrete case, which he solved according to circumstances, and he had his greatest success when he departed furthest from established rules. . . . But Lee's art seems to have died with him. Up to the present he has taught no pupil and he has inspired no successor."\*

\* Quoted by Gamaliel Bradford, *Lee, the American*, p. 189.

With these estimates of Lee still echoing in our ears how pitiful is the carping criticism of Gen. Badeau that Gen. Lee was after all only "a second-rate commander," and the jaundiced view of Longstreet, smarting under the well-deserved condemnation of the Southern soldiers after the war: "In the art of war I do not think Gen. Lee was a master."

Two circumstances ought always be in mind in considering Lee's achievements and his failures. The first is that he was hampered up to February, 1865, by the fact that he was not in supreme command. Viscount Lord Wolseley remarks that for that reason we can never take the full measure of Lee's military genius. Before he could put his plans into operation, he must always get the approval of the Richmond authorities. And political considerations sometimes decided the strategy of a campaign, instead of purely military ones. Richmond and Petersburg would have been abandoned months before they were, had sound military strategy determined Lee's policy.

And another thing of great moment in considering Lee's success or failure in his campaigns was the enemy in his rear,—the incompetence which kept his army half shod, half fed and half clothed—this in the first years of the war, and then the failure of resources and of food and of munitions, as the coils of the blockade were drawn tighter and tighter almost to strangulation. He fought Gen. Grant in front and General Want and General Desertion in his rear.





## VII

### THE SOUL OF LEE IN DISASTER

*“Human virtue should be equal to human calamity.”*

*—Robert E. Lee.*

*“The good Father has laid it on men to offer their life for an ideal. If we fought from blood lust, or hate, war would be sordid; but if we fight as only a Christian may, that friendship and peace with our foes may become possible, then fighting is our duty, and our fasting and dirt, our wounds and our death, are our beauty and God’s glory.”—A Student in Arms.*

*“In strategy mighty, in battle terrible, in adversity as in prosperity a hero indeed, with the simple devotion to duty and the rare purity of the ideal Christian knight, he joined all the kingly qualities of a leader of men.”*

*—Col. Chas. Cornwallis Chesney.*

## VII

### THE SOUL OF LEE IN DISASTER

The third day of battle at Gettysburg gives the first opportunity for studying the soul of Lee in disaster. The great charge had been made with magnificent valor, but it had failed, and the shattered remnants of that heroic column of 12,000 men were streaming back in disorder. Col. Freemantle of the British Army, an eyewitness, has described Lee's demeanor on the occasion—how serenely he faced the crushing defeat—how he met the retreating men, one by one, with words of sympathy and encouragement,—bidding them rally to the colors,—“all this will come right in the end; we'll talk of it afterwards; but in the meantime all good men must rally.” No word of reproach for the officer responsible for the disaster; no self-exculpation, but a magnanimous acceptance of the whole responsibility. “All this has been my fault. It is I that have lost this fight, and you must help me out of it the best way you can.”

No one knew better than Lee at that moment that his failure to win a decisive victory that day meant the failure of the campaign and the loss of a decisive opportunity; but, with superb magnanimity, he refrained from putting the blame of defeat where it belonged, and took it all on his own shoulders.

For the supreme example of how the soul of Lee met disaster, we must study certain crises in that last campaign against Grant, beginning the 4th of May, 1864, and ending at Appomattox April 9, 1865,—a continuous battle of eleven months' duration against General Grant's immense army, and against cold and hunger and every conceivable discouragement.

The long, desperate struggle of the army of Lee against inevitable defeat was drawing to a close. Its matchless valor could not much longer delay the end. Forces beyond Lee's control were working inexorably to destroy the strength of his army and paralyze his unexcelled military genius. The blockade of the Southern ports had been slowly but steadily strangling the South. "As a student of war," wrote Viscount Lord Wolseley to the present writer November 12, 1904, "I am of the opinion that it was the blockade of your ports that killed the Southern Confederacy; not the action of the Northern Armies."

Supremacy on the sea was the decisive factor in the conflict. While Lee was winning victories in the field, or successfully holding back the flood of invasion, the Navy of the Union was steadily cutting off the supplies necessary for the life of the Confederacy and its armies. New Orleans was taken; Vicksburg fell; the Mississippi was opened through its whole length; Grant's base on the James River was made secure by the gunboats. Sherman could march safely to the sea, because secure there of a new base of operations. Tighter and tighter the strangling cord was

drawn at all the ports by which supplies could be expected from abroad.

Before the year 1863 closed Lee warned the Richmond Government that supplies by vessels running the blockade had become so precarious that they could not longer be relied upon for the support of the Army. Already he writes, "Thousands (of the men) are barefooted, a greater number partially shod, and nearly all without overcoats, blankets or warm clothing." But matters grew worse as the months of 1864 rolled round. The winter came. Then in January, 1865, Fort Fisher fell. This closed the last channel of supply from Europe, and all knew that the hope of foreign intervention had faded away. Meanwhile the railways were breaking down. Engines and rolling stock were failing. The rails were almost worn out. Grimly and resolutely Lee's little army held its ground in the trenches before Petersburg and Richmond—33,000 muskets on a line of about thirty-three miles!—but exhaustion and starvation stared them in the face. Lee describes the situation in words that have been often quoted: "Yesterday (February 7, 1865) the most inclement day of the winter" the right wing of the army "had to be retained in line of battle" under fire of the enemy; "some of them had been without meat for three days, and all were suffering from reduced rations and scant clothing, exposed to battle, cold, hail and sleet." No wonder that he adds, "The physical strength of the men, if their courage survives, must fail under this treatment."

No one who studies the documents, or attentively considers the situation can doubt that Lee, at this time, saw the inevitable end. His army was melting away. Desertions were taking place at the rate of 100 per day—and no wonder—for hundreds of letters were coming to the soldiers from the people at home, “in which mothers, wives and sisters told of their inability to respond to the appeals of hungry children for bread, or to provide proper care and medicine for the sick; and, in the name of all that was dear, appealed to the men to come home and rescue them from the ills which they suffered and the starvation which threatened them.”

Thus clouds big with disaster were gathering round Lee and his heroic little army. Through all he remained calm and serene, meeting adversity with courage unshaken, never losing his poise, never allowing even those closest to him to see in his bearing any sign that he had given up hope, never complaining, as he might well have done, that the military necessities of the situation had been subordinated to political considerations.

Months before Lee had seen that Richmond and Petersburg should be abandoned. As early as February 22d he had suggested it to the Secretary of War.\* Their retention was not essential to success—on the contrary the determination to hold them could not but be fatal in the end. So small an army as his could not successfully withstand a siege by

\* Capt. R. E. Lee's *Recollections*, pp. 145-6.

an adversary so overwhelmingly his superior in numbers, equipment, supplies and all the materials of war. As a strategist, he saw already that the only hope for the Confederacy lay in a rapid movement to the South with the greater part of the army, before it wasted away in the unequal conflict with Gen. Grant and "General Desertion,"—to form a junction with the army of Joseph E. Johnston, and then to turn and destroy the army of Sherman. This done he could move back northward and meet Grant with some hope of success.

But this plan did not commend itself to the authorities at Richmond; and Lee, though now at last, since February 5th, Commander-in-Chief of the armies in the field, and supreme in the confidence and affection of the whole South, so that he could have compelled the acceptance of his views, held himself subordinate to the civil authorities, and hence against his better judgment he kept up the defense of Richmond and Petersburg until, when at last obliged to abandon it, it was too late to attempt the plan of uniting his army with that of Gen. Johnston. His transportation had so completely broken down that the rapid movement of his army southward was impossible.

Yet no word of complaint fell from his lips. Neither then nor afterward did he attempt to relieve himself of responsibility, and place it where it really belonged, on other shoulders than his.

By April 1st, the Confederate line had become so attenuated that "at some places it consisted of but

one man to every seven yards." But Lee dared to weaken it still further, in order to meet Sheridan at Five Forks with all the strength he could muster. And so skilful was his strategy that we can see now that a decisive victory should have been Lee's at Five Forks, but for inexcusable failure to obey his orders.

But again the culpable carelessness of his subordinates deprived Lee of the fruits of his strategy.

We may here transcribe the words of a gallant commander who took a prominent part in that battle, Gen. Thos. T. Munford: "Historians who have not made a full study of the records and who have failed to secure authentic information from participants in the Civil War possessing first-hand knowledge, have been inclined to credit Grant with superior strategy at the battle of Five Forks, and have failed to realize that this battle was the Waterloo of the Confederacy. It was my privilege to have an intimate part in this crucial battle, and I desire to place on record my personal observation of the engagement and my professional study of the strategy of the battle, with the conclusion that Gen. Lee planned this battle with a master mind, and that his superiority was never more clearly demonstrated than in his plans for the battle of Five Forks. If the plans of Gen. Lee had been properly and promptly executed, the battle would have resulted in a signal success for the Army of Northern Virginia and would have affected profoundly the duration of the war. This conclusion is borne out by the opinion of Federal



officers." Gen. Munford then referred to letters in support of his conclusion from Jefferson Davis, Gen. Wade Hampton, Gen. G. W. Custis Lee, Longstreet and others. He refers also to the report of the trial of Gen. Warren, Commander of the Fifth Corps of the Army of the Potomac.

There seems no doubt that the officer in command of the Confederate forces at Five Forks was not present till the day was lost, and no doubt that he was relieved of his command after the battle. Nor is there any doubt that Gen. R. H. Anderson, placed by Gen. Lee on that officer's extreme right, to cooperate at the proper time, was never summoned till the battle was lost, and that Sheridan testified that had Anderson with his four brigades moved down on his rear, instead of his taking Pickett's men he (Sheridan) would have been taken prisoner.

Thus it came about that the battle there resulted in a very serious defeat.

The account of Gen. Munford is confirmed and the crucial fact of the battle is explained by the testimony of a Federal officer, Gen. Morris Schaff: "Pickett's and Fitz Lee's failure to hold that position was fatal, and offered a singular instance of Fortune's bad turn of her wheel for Lee; inasmuch as, when Sheridan made his attack, the famous long-haired Pickett, Gettysburg's hero, and the cavalry commanders, blue and gay-eyed Fitz Lee, and gigantic, high-shouldered and black-eyed Rosser, were engaged in planking shad on the north bank of Hatcher's Run, two miles or more in the rear of their resolute

but greatly outnumbered troops. Although the fire was quick and heavy, it was completely smothered by the intervening timber, and notwithstanding the heroic efforts of the gallant Munford and the infantry brigade commanders, before Fitz Lee, Pickett and Rosser got to the front, the day was lost; so at least the story was told to me by my friend Rosser.”\*

This author states that Lee started several brigades under Anderson to Pickett’s help, “but before Anderson could reach Pickett, Sheridan, reinforced by Warren, assailed him and drove him with great confusion from the field.” This statement conflicts with the testimony of Gen. Munford just quoted, who states that Anderson was on the field but received no orders from Gen. Pickett—naturally, as the latter was two miles away.

Two other Federal officers have written accounts of the battle of Five Forks, Major Caswell McClellan and Major General Joshua L. Chamberlin. Their statements give additional confirmation of the accuracy of Gen. Munford’s view of the battle.

Thus Gen. Chamberlin writes: “Wise’s, Gracie’s and Hunton’s brigades had been ordered out of the Claiborne entrenchments that afternoon to attack the right flank of the Fifth Corps; but being obliged to take a roundabout way, and getting entangled among the streams and marshes north of the White Oak Road *they were too late* to reach the scene of action until all was over.” And again, “What if

\* *The Sunset of the Confederacy*, pp. 19-20.

those three Confederate brigades ordered out of the Claiborne entrenchments that afternoon to fall on the flank of the Fifth Corps attacking at Five Forks, had come straight down, and not gone a long round-about way as they did, striking too late and too far off for any good or harm,—what would have been the effect in such case.” \*

Again he writes: “Would it not have been awkward to have these 5000 fresh men come down on the backs of our infantry, while having its hands full in front? What could MacKenzie have done with these men and Fitzhugh Lee’s cavalry together? Lucky was it for us in either case that these 5000 infantrymen did not get down there.” †

“It is a very remarkable circumstance that neither of the three chief Confederate commanders was actually present on the field during the progress of the battle. They had been on the ground earlier, it seems, on retiring from Dinwiddie; but for one reason or another they had one by one retired across Hatcher’s Run—looking after their ‘communications’ very likely.‡ Pickett returned to the field only after we had all gained the Ford Road at about 6 P.M. but Fitzhugh Lee and Rosser not at all. Pickett narrowly escaped the shots of our men as he attempted

\* *The Passing of the Armies*, pp. 127, 172.

† *Id.*, p. 173.

‡ Private correspondence of Confederate officers present gives some curious details as to a shad dinner on the north side of Hatcher’s Run.

to pass them to reach his broken lines toward the White Oak Road.

"It is also remarkable that Gen. Robert E. Lee, although himself alert, was not kept informed by Fitzhugh Lee or Pickett of the movements of the Fifth Corps in relation to Five Forks, and that Lee was led by a word from Pickett to suppose that Fitzhugh Lee's and Rosser's cavalry were both close in support of Pickett's left flank at Five Forks. This was not the truth. Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry under Munford was over a thousand yards east of Pickett's left at the beginning and during the day was pressed around to the rear so as to reach his troops after their lines had all been broken; and as for Rosser's cavalry, they were at no time in the field. We know now that Gen. Robert E. Lee afterwards wrote Gen. Wade Hampton in these words: 'Had you been at Five Forks with your cavalry the disaster would not have befallen my army.' Nor does it appear that Gen. Anderson, commanding Gen. Lee's reserves in this quarter, knew anything of the pressing need of them at Five Forks until it was all over."\*

Once more he writes: "Our isolated position there invited fresh attack; and we only escaped it by the blundering or over-cautious course of the forces sent out by Lee from the Claiborne front that afternoon." †

Major Caswell McClellan in his book *Grant versus*

\* *The Passing of the Armies*, p. 173.

† *Id.*, p. 175.

*the Record* gives a similar account of the facts above referred to.\*

This blow at Five Forks was fatal. It became imperative that Petersburg should be evacuated without delay, and on the 2d of April the retreat of Lee's army began. Several days more and the end came at Appomattox. We may here transcribe the words of that gallant and generous Union soldier, Gen. Charles Francis Adams:

"Finally, when in April the summons to conflict came, the Army of Northern Virginia, the single remaining considerable organized force of the Confederacy, seemed to stagger to its feet, and, gaunt and grim, shivering with cold, and emaciated with hunger, worn down by hard, unceasing attrition, it faced its enemy, formidable still."

What a tragedy was that retreat from Petersburg! The army of Lee, outnumbered more than three to one by the army of Gen. Grant: the latter "armed, clothed, equipped, fed and sheltered as no similar force in the world's history had ever been before," the former almost starved, having been long on greatly reduced rations, scantily clothed, in large part without shoes, its vitality lowered by exposure to cold and hail and sleet, and by overwork in the trenches; the horses, too, like the men, half starved.

Nor is all this the uttermost of the disparity between the two armies. It is a fact established upon the verbal and written testimony of Major-Gen.

\* See Note at end of Chapter (p. 112).

G. W. Custis Lee, that Gen. Lee had sent to the authorities in Richmond a confidential statement indicating the lines by which he would withdraw his army and the points where he wished supplies to be accumulated; and that this document, found by Gen. Weitzel in the office of Mr. Jefferson Davis, shortly after the fall of Richmond, was sent *post-haste* to Gen. Grant. Thus the Union commander, within twenty-four hours after Lee began his retreat, was put in possession of that officer's whole plan of operations. No wonder the Union General Benham exclaimed to a Confederate officer, captured at Sailors Creek, "Oh, you could not get away. We knew beforehand every move you were going to make."

This fact disposes of the claim of Mr. Rodes that Grant outgeneraled Lee in the retreat to Appomattox. When the lion is caught in the net, it does not require the skill of a mighty hunter to slay him!

It is strange that Mr. Gamaliel Bradford hesitates to accept the fact above narrated. He refers to it as a "very remarkable anecdote" and admits that "the story seems well authenticated," yet concludes that it is "rather difficult to accept." (See his *Notes*, p. 302.) To our mind it seems difficult *not* to accept. It is told orally, and again in writing, by Major-Gen. Custis Lee, a very clear-headed man, as an incident in his own experience. At Sailors Creek where Gen. Custis Lee was captured with Gen. Ewell April 6th, Gen. Benham "began talking to Gen. Ewell in a loud tone of voice. . . . 'I heard Gen. Ben-

ham say . . . that Gen. Weitzel had found, soon after his entrance into Richmond, a letter from Gen. Lee (etc., quoted above), stating what he proposed to do should it become necessary to withdraw from the lines before Richmond and Petersburg, and that the letter was immediately sent to Gen. Grant. In answer to some doubt expressed by Gen. Ewell, or someone else, Gen. Benham replied, 'Oh, there is no doubt about the letter, for I saw it myself.' "

This statement from Gen. Custis Lee is to be found in the *Memoirs of Jefferson Davis* by his wife (1890), vol. II, p. 595, and also in a fuller oral form in *A Soldier's Recollections* (McKim, 1911), pp. 265-268. Gen. Robert Lee's comments to his son when told of this incident confirm the fact that he had written such a letter as was alleged to have been found.

What makes the fact of its being left in the scrap basket easy to believe is the fact that Jefferson Davis was notoriously careless in the handling of important documents. The writer has heard Col. Charles Marshall, Lee's military secretary, descant upon this, and give instance after instance of the fact.\*

How did Lee bear himself under these disastrous conditions? Let one of his staff, Gen. Long, answer:

"During these trying scenes his countenance wore its habitual calm, grave expression. Those who watched his face to catch a glimpse of what was

\* See Note on p. 114.

passing in his mind could gather thence no trace of his inner sentiments. Only once during the retreat was he perceived to lose the most complete self-control. On enquiring at Farmville why a certain bridge had not been burned, he spoke of the blunder with a warmth and impatience which served to show how great a repression he ordinarily exercised over his feelings.”\*

The same officer relates that on April 7th, some of Lee’s principal officers deputed Gen. Pendleton to say that in their opinion further resistance was hopeless and that negotiations should be opened for a surrender of the army. But even then Lee’s heroic soul would not yield to the decree of Fate. It is of moment here to note that he said to Gen. Pendleton:

“I have never believed we could, against the gigantic combination for our subjugation, make good in the long run our independence unless foreign powers should assist us. . . . But such considerations really made with me no difference. We had, I was satisfied, sacred principles to maintain and rights to defend, for which we were in duty bound to do our best, even if we perished in the endeavor.”

And now we see another display of that dauntless and unconquerable courage which still flamed up in the Soul of Lee: On the 8th of April he resolved to cut his way through the host that encircled him. His heroic little army, reduced now to 10,000 effectives,

\* *Memoirs*, p. 413.



marched forth at 3 A.M. on the 9th to assail an enemy 75,000 strong. "But," says Long, "notwithstanding the stupendous odds there was not in that little band a heart that quailed or a hand that trembled; there was not one of them who would not willingly have laid down his life in the cause they had so long maintained, and for the noble chief who had so often led them to victory."

But when on the early morning of April 9th the little army advanced to make the forlorn attempt, it found Grant's multitudes right across its path; the enterprise was abandoned; and Lee resolved to surrender the remnant of the Army of Northern Virginia. The capture of his letter to Jefferson Davis, detailing his plans, had done its fatal work!

Gen. Alexander has told us how he earnestly remonstrated with Gen. Lee against the surrender of the army and counselled a dispersion of the soldiers individually to rally subsequently as best they might for further resistance; and he has recorded Gen. Lee's reply:

"General, you and I as Christian men have no right to consider only how this would affect us. We must consider its effect on the country as a whole. Already it is demoralized by the four years of war. If I took your advice, the men would be without rations and under no control of officers. They would be compelled to rob and steal in order to live. They would become mere bands of marauders and the enemy's cavalry would pursue them and overrun many wide sections. . . . We would bring on a state of

affairs it would take the country years to recover from.” \*

These words revealed the greatness of the soul of Lee, and they settled the question definitely and finally. Alexander says: “I had not a single word to say in reply. He had answered my suggestion from a plane so far above it, that I was ashamed of having made it.”

It was a great crisis, not for Lee only, as at Arlington four years before, but for the whole South, yes, and for the North too; and he rose to its full height. As then he faced the issue alone, so now. He sought no counsel. He looked for none to divide the responsibility with him. He asked no support from his generals in deciding the question. And thus Lee saved the country, North and South, from the horrors of a guerrilla warfare. To have waged such warfare would have been the counsel of many of his officers. But Lee summoned no Council of War. “Sitting before the bivouac fire,” says Charles Francis Adams, “at Appomattox he reviewed the situation. Doing so, as before at Arlington, he reached his own conclusion. That conclusion he himself at the time expressed in words, brief indeed, but vibratory with moral triumph: ‘The question is, is it right to surrender the army? If it is right, then I will take all the responsibility.’ ”

And so Lee asked for a conference with Grant; the surrender was speedily effected; and the Confed-

\*Alexander, *Military Memoirs*, p. 600.

erate commander returned to his lines. "It is impossible," writes Gen. Long, "to describe the anguish of the troops when it was known that the surrender of the army was inevitable. . . . The bronzed faces of thousands of grim warriors were bathed in tears. As he rode slowly along the line, hundreds of his devoted veterans pressed around the noble chief, trying to take his hand, touch his person, or even lay their hands upon his horse. . . . The General then with head bare and tears flowing down his manly cheeks, bade adieu to the army." With a voice quivering with emotion he said:

"Men, we have fought through the war together; I have done my best for you; my heart is too full to say more."

To the last those heroes of the Army of Northern Virginia were unconquered. That very morning they had fought with all their old intrepidity and resolution. And they would have fought on until the last man had fallen, face to foe; but when Lee told them to sheathe their swords and stack their muskets they obeyed him, though with breaking hearts.

This his last act as Commander of the Confederate Armies was every way worthy of his heroic character. How much easier, as he himself said, to have put himself at the head of that indomitable remnant of his army and died with them in one last desperate charge! "I would rather die a thousand deaths," he had exclaimed, when he saw that he must surrender his army. But, true to the principles which

governed his whole career, he thought not of himself, but of his people, of his Country—of what it behooved him to do for generations yet unborn. And he made the supreme and glorious resolve to surrender his army. His life to that very hour had been a commentary upon his own noble utterance, "*There is a true glory and a true honor, the glory of duty done.*" And now on this day, and till his life ended, he gave supreme proof of another of his sayings, "*Human virtue should be equal to human calamity.*"

To his soldiers, *those 8000 men with muskets in line of battle that 9th of April, 1865*, whom he surrendered to Grant's great host, he said in his last General Order, dated April 10th,—“You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed.”

That consciousness the soul of Lee bore deeply graven within till he yielded it up to God five years later.\*

\* The returns from the various commands made that morning showed an aggregate of 8000 muskets in line of battle.—*Col. Walter H. Taylor*, p. 151.

#### NOTE TO PAGE 104

In a letter which appeared in the *Philadelphia Weekly Times*, April 5, 1885, published during the lifetime of General Pickett, who never challenged its accuracy, General Rosser, after describing the battle of Five Forks, says: “It seems to have been a surprise to General Pickett. One would have supposed he would have been on the alert in the presence of the enemy he had so recently been fighting.”

In another letter, which is also public property, addressed to Capt. A. S. Parham, 905 Westminister Street, Washington, and dated Charlottesville, April 29, 1902, General Rosser describes the shad-bake alluded to above and tells of the arrival of pickets who reported the advance of the enemy "on all the roads I was picketing." He adds that "little attention, however, was given to the enemy's advance."

He, however, says: "Pickett's conduct at Five Forks was the cause of Lee's losing all confidence in him and had the opportunity been given he would have been court-martialed. He failed to guard his left flank and failed to join his command when Col. T. T. Munford reported the enemy's advance."

General Fitz Lee says in his report of the Appomattox campaign that "had General Anderson with Wise's, Gracie's and Hunton's brigades who, leaving their position at Burgess Mill, marched by a circuitous route to our relief, advanced up the direct road, White Oak, he would have been on the flank and rear of the enemy forming the enemy's right which attacked our right at Five Forks and would probably have changed the result of the unequal conquest.

"Whilst Anderson was marching the 5th Corps was marching back and was able to participate in the attack upon our lines the next day whilst the services of these three brigades by which Anderson was to reinforce us came up too late for use and the five with Pickett, by their absence, increased the disparity between the contending forces on the next day for the lines circumvallating Petersburg."

This statement throws light upon the serious apprehension expressed by Gen. Chamberlin as to what might have been a disastrous result to the Federal forces had these brigades come in upon their rear. General Lee himself, in his report to Mr. Jefferson Davis, tells us that he had sent Anderson to reinforce Pickett; but it appears that General Anderson was not notified by General Pickett or by General Fitzhugh Lee of the approach of the enemy. General Munford says that General Anderson was not informed of the situation or summoned to take part in the battle.

## NOTE TO PAGE 107

Gen. Custis Lee states that when he told his father what Gen. Benham said, he was greatly moved and exclaimed, "Well, Custis, that explains it! I could never till now understand why I failed to extricate my army. I never worked harder than I did then to accomplish it, yet every move I made was at once checkmated."

VIII

LEE AND THE ARMY OF NORTHERN  
VIRGINIA

*“Like Napoleon, Lee’s troops soon learned to believe him equal to every emergency that war could bring. . . . Like Cæsar he mixed with the crowd of soldiers freely, and never feared that his position would be forgotten.”—Col. Charles Cornwallis Chesney.*

*“He was the head and front, the very life and soul of the Army.”—Gen. Jubal A. Early.*

*“Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia never sustained defeat.”—Charles Francis Adams.*



## VIII

### LEE AND THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

It has been well said of Lee by a distinguished member of the United States General Staff: "All great soldiers before him inherited a ready-made army, but Lee made his own army."\* Not only did he organize it, and consolidate it, and fashion it into a well-tempered instrument of extraordinary efficiency, but he inspired it, in the two years nine months and ten days during which he commanded it, with his own heroic spirit. The fortitude, the patient endurance, the intrepidity, the daring, the steadiness, the poise, which he possessed, he imparted to his army, by that subtle power which a great personality is sometimes able to exert over masses of men.

Perhaps the highest encomiums ever pronounced upon the Army of Northern Virginia have come from its antagonists,—from those who grappled with it in deadly conflict and felt its prowess. Thus Gen. Hooker, who commanded the Federal Army at Chancellorsville, declared in his testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, that Lee's army showed "a steadiness and efficiency unsurpassed

\* Quoted by Mr. Gamaliel Bradford in *Lee the American*, p. 189.

in my judgment in ancient or modern times," and he added, "We have not been able to rival it." And Gen. Chas. A. Whittier of Massachusetts has said, "The Army of Northern Virginia will deservedly rank as the best army which has existed on this continent, suffering privations unknown to its opponent. The North sent no such army to the field."

Swinton, the historian of the Army of the Potomac, exclaims:

Who can ever forget, that once looked upon it, that army of tattered uniforms and bright muskets, that body of incomparable infantry, the Army of Northern Virginia, which for four years carried the revolt on their bayonets, opposing a constant front to the mighty concentration of power brought against it; which, receiving terrible blows, did not fail to give the like, and which, vital in all its parts, died only with its annihilation.

Theodore Roosevelt gives his opinion in these words, "The world has never seen better soldiers than those who followed Lee." And Charles Francis Adams in his centennial oration deliberately declares:

"Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia never sustained defeat. Finally, it is true, succumbing to exhaustion, to the end they were not overthrown in fight."

Lee's own opinion of his army has peculiar interest. Its material in his eyes was "the best in the world. . . . Nothing can surpass the gallantry and intelligence of the main body." Again he writes to Hood, "There never were such men in an army before." This confidence and admiration he did not fail to

express to them publicly, and by doing so bound them ever more closely to him: "You have fought a fierce and sanguinary battle, which, if not attended with the success that has hitherto crowned your efforts, was marked by the same heroic spirit which has commanded the respect of your enemies, the gratitude of your country and the admiration of mankind."

At this point we cannot forbear dwelling on the contrast between the Army of Northern Virginia and the army that is fighting in Europe today under the Prussian Eagles. As we follow the track of the latter we see realized the description of the Hebrew prophet, "The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness." What an appalling spectacle it is! Towns and villages reduced to ashes—libraries ruthlessly fired—glorious cathedrals daily shelled—unarmed citizens by thousands deliberately shot to death—large cities systematically pillaged and the plunder packed in trains and sent back to Germany—tens of thousands of women and girls and youths seized and deported into slavery—everywhere rapine and pillage and plunder and cruelty—millions of people deliberately reduced to starvation, and then huge indemnities demanded of the people thus spoiled and plundered.

We turn to the Army of Northern Virginia and what do we see? In four years of tremendous and increasing conflict no act of plunder, or pillage, or outrage save one (and that had no sanction from Lee) set down against it. Here we see an army instinct with the spirit of chivalry, from its great commander

to the humblest private! It invades Pennsylvania, and occupies it twenty-one days; fights a great battle, or rather a series of great battles besides many minor actions, and returns to Virginia leaving no trace of violence or rapine behind it. None of the citizens are harmed. Their houses, their farms, their villages, are immune from injury. We look in vain for the print of the iron hoof of war in the country trodden by the Army of Northern Virginia. It may be said without fear of contradiction, there is no stain on the banner under which that army fought. It went down in defeat at last, but unsullied, without a stain on its fiery folds, with no deed of shame to dim the brightness of its brilliant stars. It is doubtful if any army that ever marched has left a record that surpasses it for pure disinterested and chivalrous valor. They were not—those men who followed Lee—soldiers of fortune, but soldiers of duty, who endured for four long years all that men can endure and dared all that men can dare, in simple loyalty to the call of duty as they understood it. It is our belief that the impartial pen of history will record that its endurance has perhaps rarely been equaled, its achievements rarely surpassed in the annals of war; not by the British Squares at Fontenoy, not by Napoleon's Guard at Austerlitz, nor by Wellington's infantry at Albuera, or Talavera, or Waterloo.

As to the achievements of the Army of Northern Virginia, while under Lee's command, the words of Gen. Alexander may here be quoted. He says:

In the brief period of a thousand days (from June 1, 1862, to April 9, 1865), with inferior numbers, poorly equipped and but badly supplied with food and clothing, it fought seven great campaigns, against six picked generals of the enemy, as follows: First, against McClellan before Richmond; second, against Pope before Washington; third, against McClellan in Maryland; fourth, against Burnside before Fredericksburg; fifth against Hooper on the Rappahannock; sixth, against Meade in Pennsylvania; seventh, against Grant before Richmond.

The last campaign endured eleven months, during which the guns were scarcely silent a single day. Lee's army at its greatest numbered less than 85,000 men. It put *hors de combat* more than 262,000 Federals within the period mentioned.\*

Reflecting upon its history it must be said, that while the material of which that army was composed had much to do with its prowess and its superb *morale*, yet it is no exaggeration to say that it was what it was by the force of Lee's incomparable personality.

Gen. Grant is reported to have said, "Lee was a good deal of a headquarters general. . . . He was almost too old for active service—the best service in the field." Nothing could be farther from the picture which stands out clearly before us in the record of his relations with his army. He was constantly among his soldiers, inspecting the camps or examining the lines. He shared their hardships and their perils. He was not only their commander,

\* Gen. Alexander, *Military Memoirs*, p. 618. His figures are taken from the official archives, War Record Office, Washington.

but their Father, always caring for their welfare, always laboring to supply their wants. He lived in tents as they did, in spite of his six and fifty years,—sleeping on the ground as they did,—scarcely ever during those arduous campaigns allowing his staff officers to fix his headquarters in a house.

If his men often suffered from scanty rations, *his* table was also meagerly supplied—a dinner of cabbage and salt, or cold sweet potatoes, was not unusual at his headquarters.

He would often be in the saddle all day and then long hours at his desk, rising to inspect his lines at 4 A.M. And as he was with his soldiers on the march and in the bivouac he was also with them on the fiery front of battle, exposing himself almost recklessly in spite of the remonstrances of his generals and his Staff. At Gettysburg he rode alone into the very midst of Pickett's men when they came streaming back after their bloody repulse.

In the Wilderness, as already stated, three times at critical moments he sprang forward and put himself at the head of his brave troops to recover a lost position and avert threatening disaster—only to be compelled by the privates in the ranks to retire, while they threw themselves at immense sacrifice upon the foe and saved the day. "Lee to the rear!" shouted the men of Gregg's Texas Brigade, as one of their number seized the general's bridle rein. Even on the retreat from Petersburg he exposed himself unsparingly to fire in his eagerness to overlook the work of his artillery.

At Antietam also he was in the midst of the falling shells of McClellan's guns. Again, near Richmond, in 1864, he and a group of his soldiers attracted the fire of the enemy; whereupon Lee ordered the men back, but remained himself on the spot and then retired leisurely, but was observed to stop to pick up something. "As if unconscious of danger to himself, Gen. Lee walked across the yard, picked up some small object from the ground, and placed it upon the limb of a tree above his head." He had risked his life for *an unfledged sparrow* that had fallen from its nest.\*

In recalling these examples of Lee's habits in camp and on the march, of his bearing on the battlefield, and of his laborious attention to his lines of battle before an engagement, one cannot but wonder what was Gen. Grant's conception of "a Headquarters General!" Nor can we easily picture a commander capable of greater activity in his army or able to sustain more severe fatigue than Lee. What more "active service" could he have rendered if he had been twenty years younger? Gen. Long testifies that Lee was able to bear any amount of fatigue, being capable of remaining in his saddle all day and at his desk half the night.

In studying Lee's relation to his army we are impressed with the fact that the bond between him and his soldiers was very human. They did not only admire him as a great commander, and repose con-

\* Related by Gen. Long, *Memoirs of Lee*, p. 387.

fidence in his military genius to lead them to victory—they trusted and loved him—loved him so that they were willing to die for him. And Lee, on his part, had a personal affection for his men. He knew thousands of them by name. He was their Father as well as their Commander. Their hardships, their sufferings he bore in his heart. When they fell in battle his soul was wrung with anguish. “The love of our gallant officers and men throughout the army causes me to weep tears of blood, and to wish that I could never hear the sound of a gun again.”

How different this feeling of the great Confederate Chieftain to that of some of the famous generals of the world’s history who cared for their soldiers only as the instruments of winning battles, but personally held them in contempt—as mere *canaille*!

Lee’s soldiers were not to him mere pawns in the great game of war but comrades in a great and holy cause.

The outstanding fact in the study of Lee and his soldiers is that they not only admired him as a military genius, but had for him a reverential affection, which never failed—which he held in defeat as well as in victory,—which, in fact, waxed deeper and stronger as the dark clouds of adversity gathered about him. Truly the paroled prisoner Robert E. Lee, President of a little Virginia college, held the devotion and enthusiastic admiration of the ex-soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia, and of the whole Southern people to a degree that the victor of Chancellorsville did not possess! His most recent



biographer, a New Englander, relates the following incident taken from the *Memoirs of Capt. R. E. Lee*. "Lee was riding alone through the woods on his beloved Traveller, when he met an old Confederate. 'Oh, General,' said the fellow, 'it does me so much good to see you that I'm going to cheer.' The general protested the utter inappropriateness. But the man cheered just the same. And as the great soldier passed slowly out of hearing through the Virginia forest, it seems to me that his heart and his eyes must have overflowed at the thought of a great cause lost, of fidelity in ruin, and of the thousands and thousands and thousands who had cheered him once and in spirit would go on cheering him forever." \*

This paternal affection of Lee for his soldiers was not inconsistent with the exercise of that discipline which is an essential element in an effective army. He could, upon occasion, be stern and immovable in enforcing it. Desertion he would sometimes punish with death.

That he was sometimes too lenient with the failures of his generals, even when their delinquencies bore disastrous consequences, is the opinion of some of his warmest admirers. His patience was infinite; his sympathy quick and deep; his exertions for the well-being of his men boundless. He was always just. Never could he be accused of favoritism. Nepotism was abhorrent to his high sense of public responsibility.

\* Bradford, *Lee the American*, p. 126.

His own son served as a private in an artillery company.

It was no inconsiderable element in his great influence with his soldiers that they knew he was a man of simple, unaffected piety,—without puritanic severity, without pretence, without cant. He would dismount from his horse even when battle had been joined, as in the Wilderness, and humbly participate in their prayer meetings.

Of his magnanimity much might be said. Two instances may be given out of abundant material. When the battle of Gettysburg had resulted not in victory, as might have been the case had his orders been carried out by his corps commanders, but in a failure that compelled retreat, Gen. Lee wrote to President Davis, "*I have no fault to find with any one but myself.*" Not a word of criticism for those who had defeated his plans,—but a noble assumption of the whole responsibility!

The other instance is found in a story told by an old Grand Army man who had been viewing the panorama of the battle of Gettysburg. He said:

I was at the battle of Gettysburg myself, and an incident occurred there which largely changed my views of the Southern people. . . . The last day of the fight I was badly wounded. A ball shattered my left leg. I lay on the ground not far from Cemetery Ridge, and as Gen. Lee ordered his retreat, he and his officers rode near me. As they came along I recognized him and though faint from exposure and loss of blood, I raised up on my hands, looked Lee in the face and shouted as loud as I could, "Hurrah for the Union!" The general heard me, looked, stopped his horse, dismounted, and came toward me.

I confess that at first I thought he meant to kill me. But as he came up he looked down at me with such a sad expression upon his face that all fear left me, and I wondered what he was about. He extended his hand to me, and grasping mine firmly and looking right into my eyes said, "My son, I hope you will soon be well."

If I live a thousand years I shall never forget the expression on Gen. Lee's face. There he was defeated, . . . and yet he stopped to say words like those to a wounded soldier of the opposition who had taunted him as he passed by! \*

Lee's attitude toward prisoners of war is illustrated by a quotation given by his son Capt. R. E. Lee from an interview with an English gentleman in 1866, in which he said that when there were not rations enough both for the prisoners and the army, he gave orders that the wants of the prisoners should first be attended to, and further stated that he had nothing whatever to do with the management of the prisons where the Union prisoners were confined.

He showed the humane spirit in which he conducted war by his famous order at Chambersburg in the Gettysburg campaign, in which he said, "The duties exacted of us by civilization and Christianity are not less obligatory upon us in the country of the enemy than in our own." Gen. Sherman's famous dictum, "War is Hell!" is undoubtedly true of war as conducted by that commander in Georgia and the Carolinas, and as conducted by Sheridan in Virginia. It has no application to war as conducted by Lee in Pennsylvania—always excepting the horrors

\* See Long's *Memoirs*, p. 302.

of the battlefield. Of both these statements let Charles Francis Adams be witness.

That Lee could administer a stinging rebuke in a single word is shown by his reported greeting to Gen. J. E. B. Stuart, when he rode up to his commander on the afternoon of the second day at Gettysburg. Looking him gravely in the face Gen. Lee said with marked emphasis, "*At last, Gen. Stuart!*" And on the retreat from Petersburg when he saw a certain Major General who, having lost a critical battle by culpable negligence, and having been relieved of his command, he turned to the staff officer riding by his side and said with feeling, "*Is that man still with this Army!*"

So much has been written by many authors of Lee's imperturbability and of his perfect poise, that some have asked, was there nothing of human frailty about the man? Did he never even give way to any display of irritation?

Whoever will study the narratives of his adjutant, Col. Taylor, and others close to him will find that there were rare occasions when he *was* irritated, and when he *did* allow some evidence of it to escape him. He was a man of fiery spirit. No doubt "the tide of blood" ran hot in his veins, but except on the rarest occasions and then in but small degree, he mastered it as a rider a restive steed.

On one occasion he said to Col. Taylor, his adjutant, "Col. Taylor, when I lose my temper, don't let it make you angry."

Col. Venable, one of Lee's staff officers, writes:

“No man could see the flush come over that grand forehead and the temple veins swell on occasions of great trial of patience, and doubt that Lee had the high strong temper of a Washington.” The brutal abuse of a horse would rouse a strong expression of indignation. This once broke forth in a letter to a member of his family in speaking of the desecration of Arlington,—only to be followed by an expression of contrition,—“You see what a poor sinner I am, and how unworthy to possess what was given me.” Beneath his calm exterior there was often concealed a tempest of wrath.

“Tell me,” said a Northern writer to a group of Southern men in the Cosmos Club at Washington, of whom the writer was one, “is there nothing in Lee’s whole life that partakes of the weaknesses of other men? . . . I really think his character would be more interesting, because more human, if there were some moral lapses that could be discovered. Perhaps you Southern men . . . can tell me at least of some peccadilloes.” But none of us could enlighten our visitor on that point. At last, however, Mr. Cazenove Lee said, “The nearest I can come to an answer to your question is to relate an incident that occurred at my father’s house in Virginia after the war. He and Gen. Lee were discussing the war, and my father said, ‘Ah, Robert, I gave up hope after Stonewall Jackson fell!’ At this Gen. Lee sprang up in his chair and exclaimed, ‘*Cassius, do you suppose Gen. Jackson went about the country fighting battles without orders!*’ ”

Marvellous indeed was his self-control, but underneath that calm exterior profound and stormy emotions sometimes stirred, as at Gettysburg after the repulse of Pickett's men. How serenely he met them on the field of battle, as they came streaming back, broken and in disorder! But when night came, and physical exhaustion had shaken even his heroic nerve, Gen. Imboden gives a truly pathetic picture of the great soldier in defeat. It was near midnight when he rode up exhausted and dismounted. "He threw his arm across his saddle to rest himself and fixing his eyes upon the ground, leaned in silence upon his equally weary horse; the two formed a striking group, as motionless as a statue. After some expressions as to Pickett's charge, etc., he added in a tone almost of agony, 'Too bad! Too bad! Oh, too bad!'" \*

His calm dignity when he met Grant at Appomattox to surrender the remnant of his army has often been described. But who can tell what wild storm of feeling was beating within his soul! "I would rather die a thousand deaths," he had said beforehand to Col. Venable. And again, as Dr. Jones reports, "How easily I could get rid of this and be at rest! I have only to ride along the lines and all will be over! But," he quickly added, "*it is our duty to live*, for what will become of the women and children of the South if we are not here to support and protect them?" †

\* *Galaxy*, vol. XI, p. 509.

† Jones, *Life*, p. 380.

Another eyewitness thus describes his appearance, "No one who looked upon him then, as he stood there in full view of the disastrous end, can ever forget the intense agony written upon his features." \*

Such was the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, glorious in victory, even more glorious in defeat, as human as he was heroic, giving glory to God in the hour of triumph, bowing submissively, though with a breaking heart, to the will of God in the hour of overwhelming disaster. Or, to quote the words of an accomplished military critic of the British Army, "In strategy mighty, in battle terrible, in adversity as in prosperity a hero indeed, with the simple devotion to duty and the rare purity of the ideal Christian knight, he joined all the kingly qualities of a leader of men."

\* Eggleston, *A Rebel's Recollections*, p. 147.





## IX

### GLIMPSES OF LEE'S ARMY

*"Their spirits effervesced. Their wit sparkled. Hunger and thirst could not depress them. Rain could not damp them. Cold could not chill them. Every hardship became a joke. . . . Never was such a triumph of spirit over matter. . . . With a gay heart they gave their greatest gift. . . . One by one Death challenged them. One by one they smiled in his grim visage and refused to be dismayed."*—*A Student in Arms.*

## IX

### GLIMPSES OF LEE'S ARMY \*

Writers on the Civil War frequently speak of the Southern Army as "the Secession Army." Yet the most illustrious leaders of that army, Robert E. Lee and "Stonewall" Jackson, to name no more, were in fact opposed to secession; though when Virginia at length withdrew from the Union, they felt bound to follow her. I think it likely indeed that a very large proportion of the conspicuous and successful officers, and a like proportion also of the men who fought in the ranks of the Confederate armies, were likewise original Union men—opposed, at any rate, to the exercise of the right of secession, even if they believed that the right existed.

It will be remembered that months elapsed between the secession of the Gulf States and that of the great Border States, Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, which furnished so large a proportion of the soldiers who fought for the Southern Confederacy. But, on the 15th of April, 1861, an event occurred which instantly transformed those great States into Secession States—the proclamation of Abraham

\* The substance of this Chapter is a republication, by kind permission, of an article by the author in the *Photographic History of the War*, vol. VIII.

Lincoln calling upon them to furnish their quota of troops to coerce the seceded States back into the Union. Even the strongest Federalists, like Hamilton, had, in the discussions in the Constitutional Convention, utterly repudiated and condemned the coercion of a State. It was not strange, then, that the summons to take up arms and march against their Southern brethren, aroused deep indignation in these States, and instantly transformed them into Secession States. But for that proclamation, the Southern Army would not have been much more than half its size, and would have missed its greatest leaders.

A glance at its personnel will perhaps be instructive. In its ranks are serving side by side the sons of the plain farmers, and the sons of the great land owners—the Southern aristocrats. Not a few of the men who are carrying muskets or serving as troopers are classical scholars, the flower of the Southern universities. In an interval of the suspension of hostilities at the battle of Cold Harbor, a private soldier lies on the ground poring over an Arabic grammar—it is Crawford H. Toy, who is destined to become the famous professor of Oriental languages at Harvard University. In one of the battles in the Valley of Virginia a volunteer aid of Gen. John B. Gordon is severely wounded—it is Basil L. Gildersleeve, who has left his professor's chair at the University of Virginia to serve in the field. He still lives, wearing the laurel of distinction as the greatest Hellenist in the English-speaking world. At the siege of Fort

Donelson, in 1862, one of the heroic captains who yields up his life in the trenches is the Rev. Dabney C. Harrison, who raised a company in his own Virginia parish, and entered the army at its head. In the Southwest a lieutenant-general falls in battle—it is Gen. Leonidas Polk, who laid aside his bishop's robes to become a soldier, having been educated to arms at West Point.

It is a striking fact that when Virginia threw in her lot with her Southern sisters in April, 1861, practically the whole body of students at her State University, 515 out of 530 who were registered from the Southern States, enlisted in the Confederate Army. This army thus represented the whole Southern people. It was a self-levy en masse of the male population in all save certain mountain regions in Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia.

One gets a perhaps new and surprising conception of the character of the rank and file of the Southern Army in such incidents as the following: Here are mock trials going on in the moot-court of a certain artillery company, and the discussions are pronounced by a competent authority "brilliant and powerful." Here is a group of privates in a Maryland infantry regiment in winter-quarter huts near Fairfax, Virginia; and among the subjects discussed are the following: Vattel and Philmore on international law; Humboldt's works and travels; the African explorations of Barth; the influence of climate on the human features; the culture of cotton; the laws relating to property. Here are some Vir-

ginia privates in a howitzer company solemnly officiating at the burial of a tame crow; and the exercises include an English speech, a Latin oration, and a Greek ode.

These Confederate Armies must present to the historian who accepts the common view that the South was fighting for the perpetuation of the institution of slavery a difficult—in fact, an insoluble—problem. How could such a motive explain the solidarity of the diverse elements that made up those armies? The Southern planter might fight for his slaves; but why the poor white man, who had none? How could slavery generate such devotion, such patient endurance, such splendid heroism, such unconquerable tenacity through four long years of painfully unequal struggle? The world acknowledges the superb valor of the men who fought under the Southern Cross—and the no less superb devotion of the whole people to the cause of the Confederacy.

Now is it credible that such valor and such devotion were inspired by the desire to hold their fellow-men in slavery? Is there any example of such a phenomenon in all the long records of history?

Consider, too, another fact for which the historians must assign a sufficient motive. On the bronze tablets in the rotunda of the University of Virginia, memorializing the students who fell in the great war, there are upwards of five hundred names, and, of these, 233 were still privates when they fell; so that, considering the number of promotions from the ranks, it is certain that far more than half of those alumni

who gave up their lives for the Southern cause, volunteered as private soldiers. They did not wait for place or office, but unhesitatingly entered the ranks, with all the hardships that the service involved.

Probably no army ever contained a larger proportion of young men of high culture among its private soldiers—graduates in arts, in letters, in languages, in the physical sciences, in the higher mathematics, and in the learned professions—as the army that fought under the Southern Cross. And how cheerful—how uncomplaining—how gallant they were! They marched and fought and starved, truly without reward. Eleven dollars a month in Confederate paper was their stipend. Flour and bacon and peanut coffee made up their bill of fare. The hard earth, or else three fence rails, tilted up on end, was their bed, their knapsacks their pillows, and a flimsy blanket their covering. The starry firmament was often their only tent. Their clothing—well, we cannot describe it. We can only say it was “a thing of shreds and patches,” interspersed with rents.

But this was not all. They had not even the reward which is naturally dear to a soldier's heart—we mean the due recognition of gallantry in action. By a strange oversight there was no provision in the Confederate Army for recognizing either by decoration or by promotion on the field, distinguished acts of gallantry. No “Victoria Cross,” or its equivalent, rewarded even the most desperate acts of valor.

Now with these facts before him, the historian will

find it impossible to believe that these men drew their swords and did these heroic deeds and bore these incredible hardships for four long years for the sake of the institution of slavery. Everyone who was conversant with the opinions of the soldiers of the Southern Army, knows that they did not wage that tremendous conflict for slavery. That was a subject very little in their thoughts or on their lips. Not one in twenty of those grim veterans, who were so terrible on the battlefield, had any financial interest in slavery. No, they were fighting for liberty, for the right of self-government. They believed the Federal authorities were assailing that right. It was the sacred heritage of Anglo-Saxon freedom, of local self-government, won at Runnymede, which they believed in peril when they flew to arms as one man, from the Potomac to the Rio Grande. They may have been right, or they may have been wrong, but that was the issue they made. On that they stood. For that they died.

Not until this fact is realized by the student of the great war will he have the solution of the problem which is presented by the qualities of the Confederate soldier. The men who made up that army were not soldiers of fortune, but soldiers of duty, who dared all that men can dare, and endured all that men can endure, in obedience to what they believed the sacred call of Country. They loved their States; they loved their homes and their firesides; they were no politicians; many of them knew little of the warring theories of Constitutional interpretation. But one



thing they knew—armed legions were marching upon their homes, and it was their duty to hurl them back at any cost!

Such were the private soldiers of the Confederacy. Not for fame or for glory, not lured by ambition or goaded by necessity, but, in simple obedience to duty as they understood it, these men suffered all, sacrificed all, dared all—and died!

A conspicuous feature of this Southern Army is its Americanism. Go from camp to camp, among the infantry, the cavalry, the artillery, and you are impressed with the fact that these men are, with very few exceptions, Americans. Here and there you will encounter one or two Irishmen. Major Stiles tells a story of a most amusing encounter between two gigantic Irishmen at the battle of Gettysburg—the one a Federal Irishman, a prisoner, and the other a Rebel Irishman, private in the Ninth Louisiana—a duel with fists in the midst of the roar of the battle! Very, very rarely you will meet a German, like that superb soldier, Major Von Borcke, who so endeared himself to “Jeb” Stuart’s cavalry. But these exceptions only accentuate the broad fact that the Confederate Army was composed almost exclusively of Americans. That throws some light on its achievements, does it not?

I think the visitor to the Confederate camps would also be struck by the spirit of *bonhomie* which so largely prevailed. These “Johnnie Rebs,” in their gray uniforms (which, as the war went on, changed in hue to butternut brown), are a jolly lot. They have a

dry, racy humor of their own which breaks out on the least provocation. They are often heard cracking jokes on the very edge of battle. They were "soldier boys" to the bitter end!

Gen. Rodes, in his report, describing the dark and difficult night-passage of the Potomac on the retreat from Gettysburg, says, "All the circumstances attending this crossing combined to make it an affair not only involving great hardship, but one of great danger to the men and company officers; but, be it said to the honor of these brave fellows, they encountered it not only promptly, but actually with cheers and laughter."

On the other hand, some from the remote country districts were like children away from home. They could not get used to it—and often they drooped, and sickened and died, just from nostalgia. In many of the regiments during the first six months or more of the war, there were negro cooks, but as time went on these disappeared, except in the officers' mess. Among the Marylanders, it was quite different. We had to do our own cooking. Once a week, each performed that office for a mess of fifteen hungry men. At first we lived on "slapjacks"—almost as fatal as Federal bullets!—and fried bacon; but by degrees we learned to make biscuits, and on one occasion two colleagues in the culinary business created an apple pie, which the whole mess considered a *chef d'œuvre!* May we call your attention to those ramrods wrapped round with dough and set up on end before the fire? The cook turns them from time to time, and, when

well browned, he withdraws the ramrod, and, lo! a loaf of bread, three feet long and hollow from end to end.

The general aspect of the Confederate camps compared unfavorably with those of the men in blue. They were not, as a rule, attractive in appearance. The tents and camp equipage were nothing like so "smart," so spick and span—very far from it indeed! Our engineer corps were far inferior, lacking in proper tools and equipment. The sappers and miners of the Federal Army on Cemetery Hill, at Gettysburg, did rapid and effective work during the night following the first day's battle, as they had previously done at Chancellorsville—work which our men could not begin to match. When we had to throw up breastworks in the field, as at Hagerstown, after Gettysburg, it had usually to be done with our bayonets. Spades and axes were luxuries at such times. Bands of music were rare, and generally of inferior quality; but the men made up for it as far as they could by a gay insouciance, and by singing in camp and on the march. You might see the men of the First Maryland Infantry trudging wearily through mud and rain, sadly bedraggled by a long march, strike up with great gusto their favorite song, "Gay and Happy."

So let the wide world wag as it will,  
We'll be gay and happy still.

The contrast between the sentiment of the song and the environment of the column was sufficiently

striking. In one respect, we think, our camps had the advantage of the Union camps—we had no sutlers, and we had no camp followers.

But though our camp equipage and equipment were so inferior to those of our antagonists, we do not think any experienced soldier, watching our marching columns of infantry or cavalry, or witnessing our brigade drills, could fail to be thrilled by the spectacle they presented. Here, at least, there was no inferiority to the army in blue. The soldierly qualities that tell on the march, and on the field of battle, shone out here conspicuously. A more impressive spectacle has seldom been seen in any war than was presented by “Jeb” Stuart’s brigades of cavalry when they passed in review before Gen. Lee at Brandy Station in June, 1863. The pomp and pageantry of gorgeous uniforms and dazzling equipment of horse and riders were indeed absent; but splendid horsemanship, and that superb *esprit de corps* that marked that veteran legion, and which, though not a tangible or a visible thing, yet stamps itself upon a marching column—these were unmistakably there. And we take leave to express our own individual opinion that the blue-gray coat of the Confederate officer, richly adorned with gold lace, and his light-blue trousers, and that rakish slouch hat he wore made up a uniform of great beauty. Oh, it was a gallant array to look upon—that June day, so many years ago!

When our infantry soldiers came to a river, unless it was a deep one, we had to cross it on “Confederate

pontoons," i. e., by marching right through in column of fours. This we did twice on one day on the march from Culpeper to Winchester at the opening of the Gettysburg campaign.

Among the amusements in camp, card-playing was, of course, included; seven-up and vingt-et-un were popular. And the pipe was "Johnnie Reb's" frequent solace. His tobacco, at any rate, was the real thing—genuine, no make-believe, like his coffee. Often there were large gatherings of the men, night after night, attending prayer meetings, always with preaching added, for there was a strong religious tone in the Army of Northern Virginia. One or two remarkable revivals took place, notably in the winter of 1863-64.

It seems as we look back, that one of the characteristics which stood out strongly in the Confederate Army was the independence and the initiative of the individual soldier. It would have been a better army in the field if it had been welded together by a stricter discipline; but this defect was largely atoned for by the strong individuality of the units in the column. It was not easy to demoralize a body composed of men who thought for themselves and acted in a spirit of independence in battle.

It was a characteristic of the Confederate soldier—we do not say he alone possessed it—that he never considered himself discharged of his duty to the colors by any wound, however serious, so long as he could walk, on crutches or otherwise. Look at that private in the Thirty-seventh Virginia Infantry—he has been

hit by a rifle-ball, which, striking him full between the eyes, has found its way somehow through and emerged at the back of his head. But there he is in the ranks again, carrying his musket—while a deep depression, big enough to hold a good-sized marble, marks the spot where the bullet entered in its futile attempt to make this brave fellow give up his service with the Confederate banner! Look at Capt. Randolph Barton, of another Virginia regiment. He is living today with just about one dozen scars on his body. He would be wounded; get well; return to duty, and in the very next battle be shot again! Look at that gallant old soldier, Gen. Ewell. Like his brave foeman, Gen. Sickles, he has lost his leg, but that cannot keep him at home; he continues to command one of Lee's corps almost to the very end at Appomattox. Look at Col. R. Snowden Andrews of Maryland. At Cedar Mountain, in August, 1862, a shell literally nearly cut him in two; but by a miracle he did not die; and, in June, 1863, there he is again commanding his artillery battalion! He is bowed crooked by that awful wound; he cannot stand upright any more, but still he can fight like a lion.

As you walk through the camps, you will see many of the men busily polishing their muskets and their bayonets with wood ashes well moistened. "Bright muskets" and "tattered uniforms" went together in the Army of Northern Virginia.

Apropos of muskets, you will observe that a large portion of those in the hands of the Confederate soldiers are stamped "U. S. A."; and when you visit

the artillery camps you will note that the three inch rifles, the Napoleons, and the Parrott guns, were most of them "Uncle Sam's" property, captured in battle; and when you inspect the cavalry you will find, after the first year, that the Southern troops are armed with sabers captured from the Federals.\* During the first year, before the blockade became stringent, Whitworth guns were brought in from abroad. But that soon stopped, and we had to look largely to "Uncle Sam" for our supply.

We used to say in the Shenandoah Valley campaign, of 1862, that Gen. Banks was Gen. Jackson's quartermaster-general—yes, and his chief ordnance officer, too. Gen. Shields was another officer to whom we were much indebted for artillery and small arms, and later Gen. Pope.† But these sources of equipment sometimes failed us, and so it came to pass that some of our regiments were but poorly armed even in our best brigades. For instance, the Third Brigade in Ewell's corps, one of the best-equipped brigades in the army, entered the Gettysburg campaign with 1941 men present for duty, but

\* It is estimated by surviving ordnance officers that not less than two-thirds of the artillery in the Army of Northern Virginia was captured, especially the 3-inch rifles and the 10-pound Parrotts.

† General Gorgas, Chief of the Confederate Ordnance Bureau, stated that from July 1, 1861, to Jan. 1, 1865, there were issued from the Richmond arsenal 323,231 infantry arms, 34,067 cavalry arms, 44,877 swords and sabers, and that these were chiefly arms from battlefields, repaired.

only 1480 muskets and 1069 bayonets. But this was not all, or the worst. Our artillery ammunition was inferior to that of our antagonists, which was a great handicap to our success.

When Gen. Alexander, Longstreet's chief of artillery at Gettysburg, was asked why he ceased firing when Pickett's infantry began its charge—why he did not continue shelling the Federal lines over the heads of the advancing Confederate column, he replied that his ammunition was so defective, he could not calculate with any certainty where the shells would explode; they might explode among Pickett's men, and so demoralize rather than support them. It will help the reader to realize the inequality in arms and equipment between the two armies to watch a skirmish between some of Sheridan's cavalry and a regiment of Fitzhugh Lee. Observe that the Federal cavalryman fires his rifle seven times without reloading, while the horseman in gray opposed to him fires but once, and then lowers his piece to reload. One is armed with the Spencer repeating rifle; the other with the old Sharp's rifle.

In another engagement (at Winchester, September 19, 1864), see that regiment of mounted men give way in disorder before the assault of Sheridan's cavalry, and dash back through the infantry. Are these men cowards? No, but they are armed with long cumbrous rifles utterly unfit for mounted men, or with double-barreled shotguns, or old squirrel-rifles. What chance has a regiment thus armed, and also miserably mounted, against those well-



armed, well-equipped, well-mounted, and well-disciplined Federal cavalrymen?\*

Another feature of the conditions prevailing in the Confederate Army may be here noted. Look at Lee's veterans as they march into Pennsylvania, in June, 1863. See how many of them are barefooted—literally hundreds in a single division. The great battle of Gettysburg was precipitated because Gen. Heth had been informed that he could get shoes in that little town for his barefooted men!

These hardships became more acute as the war advanced, and the resources of the South were gradually exhausted, while at the same time the blockade became so effective that her ports were hermetically sealed against the world. With what grim determination the Confederate soldier endured cold and nakedness and hunger I need not attempt to describe, but there was a trial harder than all these to endure, which came upon him in the fourth year of the war. Letters began to arrive from home telling of food scarcity on his little farm or in the cabin where he had left his wife and children. Brave as the Southern women were, rich and poor alike, they could not conceal altogether from their husbands

\* The arms and equipment of the Confederate Army will be found fully discussed by Professor J. W. Mallet, late Superintendent of the Ordnance Laboratories of the Confederate States, and Captain O. E. Hunt, U. S. A., in the chapter on the "Organization and Operation of the Ordnance Department of the Confederate Army," in the volume on "Forts and Artillery."

the sore straits in which they found themselves. Many could not keep back the cry: "What am I to do? Food is hard to get. There is no one to put in the crop. God knows how I am to feed the children!"

So a strain truly terrible was put upon the loyalty of the private soldier. He was almost torn asunder between love for his wife and children and fidelity to the flag under which he was serving. What wonder if hundreds, yes thousands, in those early spring months of 1865, gave way under the pressure, slipped out of the Confederate ranks, and went home to put in the crop for their little families, meaning to return to the colors as soon as that was done! Technically, they were deserters, but not in the heart or faith, poor fellows! Still, for Lee's army the result was disastrous. It was seen in the thinning ranks that opposed Grant's mighty host, week after week. This is the South's explanation of the fact, which the records show, that while at the close of the war there were over a million men under arms in the Federal Armies, the aggregate of the Confederates was but 133,433.

How could an army so poorly equipped, so imperfectly armed, so ill fed and ill clothed, win out in a contest with an army so vastly its superior in numbers and so superbly armed and equipped? How could an agricultural people, unskilled in the mechanical arts, therefore unable to supply properly its armies with munitions and clothing, prevail against a great, rich, manufacturing section like the North, whose

foreign and domestic trade had never been so prosperous as during the great war it was waging from 1861 to 1865?

Remember, also, that by May, 1862, the armies of the Union were in permanent occupancy of western and middle Tennessee, of nearly the whole of Louisiana, of parts of Florida, of the coast of North and South Carolina and of southeastern, northern, and western Virginia. Now the population thus excluded from the support of the Confederacy amounted to not less than 1,200,000. It follows that, for the last three years of the war, the unequal contest was sustained by about 3,800,000 Southern whites with their slaves against the vast power of the Northern States. And yet none of these considerations furnishes the true explanation of the failure of the Confederate Armies to establish the Confederacy. It was not superior equipment. It was not alone the iron will of Grant, or the strategy of Sherman. A power mightier than all these held the South by the throat and slowly strangled its army and its people. The power was Sea Power. The Federal Navy, not the Federal Army, conquered the South.

"In my opinion," said Field-Marshal Viscount Wolseley, in a private letter to the author already quoted, "in my opinion, as a student of war, the Confederates must have won, had the blockade of the Southern ports been removed by us." Compare with this mature opinion of the accomplished English soldier the words of Hon. Hugh McCulloch, one of Lincoln's Secretaries of the Treasury.

“It was the blockade that isolated the Confederate States and caused their exhaustion. If the markets of Europe had been open to them for the sale of their cotton and tobacco, and the purchase of supplies for their armies, their subjugation would have been impossible. It was not by defeats in the field that the Confederates were overcome, but by the exhaustion resulting from their being shut up within their own domain, and compelled to rely upon themselves and their own production. Such was the devotion of the people to their cause, that the war would have been successfully maintained, if the blockade had not cut off all sources of supply and bankrupted their treasury.” Again he says: “It must be admitted that the Union was not saved by the victories of its armies, but by the exhaustion of its enemies.” Charles Francis Adams, in his oration on Gen. Lee, vigorously maintains the same view, and Col. Hilary A. Herbert, while Secretary of the Navy, delivered an elaborate address in 1896, in which he demonstrated the correctness of that interpretation of the true cause of the failure of the South.

In concluding, we may recall the well-known fact that the men in gray and the men in blue, facing each other before Petersburg, fraternized in those closing months of the great struggle. A Confederate officer, aghast at finding one night the trenches on his front deserted, discovered his men were all over in the Federal trenches, playing cards. The rank and file had made a truce till a certain hour!

X

THE NUMERICAL STRENGTH OF THE  
CONFEDERATE ARMY

*Exigni numero, sed bello vivida virtus.*

*“It will be difficult to get the world to understand the odds against which we fought.”—Robert E. Lee.*

*“No one, certainly, since the time of Napoleon has conquered against such immense odds.”—London Times.*

## X

### THE NUMERICAL STRENGTH OF THE CONFEDERATE ARMY

To estimate at all correctly the military achievements of Gen. Lee, we must consider the great odds against which he fought, as to numbers, as well as resources. It will be helpful, therefore, to set before the reader a reasonable estimate of the numerical strength of the Confederate Armies as a whole.

Southern writers generally estimate that the Confederate Armies had on their muster rolls, as fighting men, from first to last, from 600,000 to 650,000 men.

Many Northern writers, on the other hand, estimate the actual enrollment of the Confederate Armies as more than 1,100,000—even 1,500,000 men.

Now there are five lines of independent evidence which support the Southern conclusion upon this question.

I. Our figures are supported by the statements of a number of men who were in position to know what was the total effective strength of the Southern Armies. Among them were Gen. Cooper, adjutant-general of the Confederate Armies, writing in 1869 (see *Southern Historical Society Papers*, vol. VII, p. 287); Dr. A. T. Bledsoe, Assistant Secretary of War; Gen. John Preston, Chief of the Conscription Bureau;

Vice-President Alexander H. Stephens (*War Between the States*, 1870, vol. II, p. 630); Gen. Jubal A. Early, (*Southern Historical Papers*, vol. II, p. 20); Dr. Joseph Jones (official report, June, 1890, *Southern Historical Society Papers*, XIX, 14), and Gen. Marcus J. Wright—who now, however, puts the numbers at 700,000 (*Southern Historical Society Papers*, 19, 254). We ask what better authorities on this subject could be named than the adjutant-general of the army, the Assistant Secretary of War, and Chief of the Conscription Bureau of the Confederate States?

In August, 1869, Dr. Joseph Jones sent to Gen. Cooper a carefully prepared paper on this subject, maintaining the above estimate and asking his opinion as to the accuracy of the data contained therein. Gen. Cooper replied that after having “closely examined” the paper he had “come to the conclusion, from his general recollection,” that “it must be regarded as nearly critically correct.” Is it credible that the adjutant-general of the Confederate Army should have given as his opinion that this number—600,000,—was “nearly critically correct,” if in fact there had been upon the rolls of the Confederate Armies twice that number,—1,277,000 men,—as Gen. Chas. Francis Adams would have us believe?

II. By adding together the Confederate prisoners in the hands of the United States at the close of the war, 98,000; the soldiers who surrendered in 1865, 174,223; those who were killed or died of wounds, 74,508; died in prison, 26,439; died of disease, 59,277; died from other causes, 40,000; discharged,



57,411; deserters, 83,372; we get a total of 613,230. These figures as to the killed and died of wounds, and of disease, are taken from Fox's monumental work on regimental losses. He "conjectures" that nearly 20,000 must be added to the 74,508 given above, making 94,000; but gives no grounds for this.

III. Again, the official report of Gen. S. Cooper, Adjutant-General, dated March 1, 1862 (127 W. R. 963), states the aggregate of the Confederate Armies, including armed and organized militia, officers and men, as. . . 340,250

Gen. Preston, Superintendent of Con-	
scription, C. S. A., reports from February,	
1862, to February, 1865 (W. R., series 4, vol.	
3, p. 1101): Conscriptions (exclusive of	
Arkansas and Texas).....	81,993
Enlistments east of the Mississippi River...	76,206
	<hr/>
	498,449

Estimated conscriptions and enlistments	
west of the river and elsewhere.....	120,000
	<hr/>
Total.....	618,449

IV. Now compare with these reports the following statement from the New York *Tribune* of June 26, 1867:

"Among the documents which fell into our hands at the downfall of the Confederacy are the returns, very nearly complete, of the Confederate Armies from their organization in the summer of 1861 down to the spring of 1865. These returns have been care-

fully analyzed, and I am enabled to furnish the returns in every department and for almost every month from these official sources. We judge in all 600,000 different men were in the Confederate ranks during the war."

This was accompaneid by a detailed tabular statement.

Is not this good secondary evidence as to the numbers of men in the Confederate Army, especially when we remember the statement of Gen. Cooper, late adjutant-general of the Confederate Armies? He says:

"The files of this office which could best afford this information (as to numbers) were carefully boxed up and taken on our retreat from Richmond to Charlotte, North Carolina, where they were, unfortunately, captured, and, as I learn, are now in Washington." These files, be it remembered, have never been examined by any Southern writer.

Observe also that the *American Encyclopædia* (1875), of which Mr. Charles A. Dana, late Assistant Secretary of War, U. S., was editor, quotes Gen. Cooper's statement as to numbers, without comment, thus tacitly admitting the truth of that statement. Can it be justly said, in the light of these facts, that the estimate usually given by Southern writers is "based on assertion only"?

V. There is a fifth line upon which we are led to a very similar conclusion.

In the work of Lieut-Col. Wm. F. Fox, *Regimental Losses in the Civil War*, we find the strength of the

Confederate Armies furnished by the seceded States and by the Border States as well, reckoned as follows: 529 regiments and 85 battalions of infantry; 127 regiments and 47 battalions of cavalry; 8 regiments and 1 battalion of partisan rangers; 5 regiments and 6 battalions of heavy artillery, and 261 batteries of light artillery—in all equivalent to 764 regiments of 10 companies. In making this statement Col. Fox assures his readers that “no statistics are given that are not warranted by the official records.”

As to the size of the regiments we get some light from the following reports: The Confederate adjutant-general reports in March, 1862, an average strength of 823 men in 369 regiments and 89 battalions (127 W. R. 963). Beauregard's Corps (32 regiments) is reported August 31, 1861, as numbering 1037 men to the regiment (5 W. R. 824). Longstreet's Virginia troops, June 23, 1862, averaged 754 men to the regiment. (14 W. R. 614, 615.)

But more important is the legislation of the Congress. The Confederate Act of March 6, 1861, prescribed for infantry companies the number of 104, and for cavalry 72, which gives, for an infantry regiment (10 companies) 1040 men, and for a cavalry regiment 720 men—provided the ranks were full, which was by no means the rule but rather the exception. Observe now that in November, 1861, the War Department prescribed that no infantry company should be accepted with less than 64 men and no cavalry company with less than 60 and no artillery company with less than 70. On this basis infantry

regiments might number only 640 men and cavalry regiments only 600.

This marked change in the standard of the size of companies and regiments prescribed by the War Department in November, 1861, as compared with the Act of March, 1861, lowering the requisite number of men in an infantry regiment from 1040 to 640, and in a cavalry regiment from 720 to 600, is suggestive of the fact that it was not found easy to raise regiments of the size originally prescribed.

Now in calculating the strength of the Confederate Army from the number of regiments, we shall probably approximate a correct result by taking the mean between the larger and smaller number just referred to. But the mean between 1040 and 640 is 840, and that between 720 and 600 is 660.

Applying this standard to Col. Fox's statement of the troops in the entire Confederate Army, we get the following result:

	Men.
529 regiments of infantry, 840 each.....	444,360
85 battalions infantry, 400 each.....	34,000
127 regiments cavalry, 600 each.....	76,200
47 battalions cavalry, 400 each.....	18,800
261 batteries light artillery, 70 each.....	16,270
5 regiments heavy artillery, 800 each.....	4,000
6 battalions heavy artillery, 400 each.....	2,400
8 regiments partisan rangers, 700 each.....	5,600
1 battalion partisan rangers.....	350
	<hr/>
	601,908

The size of infantry and cavalry battalions and of regiments and battalions of heavy artillery in this

calculation, as well as of the regiments of partisan rangers, is in each case suggested by that accomplished and experienced officer, Col. Walter H. Taylor, adjutant-general on the staff of Gen. Robert E. Lee. His figures may be rather high—certainly they are not too low. Of course such a calculation is necessarily only approximate, but the basis on which it is made appears reasonably reliable. To one who had personal observation of the armies in Virginia from the first battle of Manassas to Appomattox, the standard of strength in regiments and battalions in the field above adopted, seems in conformity with the facts.

These five lines of evidence appear to give strong support to the conclusion that the Southern writers allude to.

Let us add, however, some important considerations of a general nature bearing on the problem.

1. During the first year of the war the Confederate Government could not have availed itself of even 500,000 men for its armies, inasmuch as it was utterly unable to arm and equip them. The supply of arms and of artillery was utterly inadequate for even half that number.\* As the war progressed the muskets, the sabres, the cannon, used in the Confederate Army, if examined, would have been found

\* The author acted as adjutant of the Third Brigade, A. N. Va., in the Gettysburg campaign. Even then, in the third year of the war, and in that best equipped army, the returns showed only 1480 muskets to 1941 men in the brigade. One-fourth of the command was without arms.

to have been in larger part captured on the field of battle. Pompey the Great is reported to have said, "I have only to stamp with my foot to raise legions from the soil of Italy." Had Jefferson Davis been able by the stamp of his foot to summon 1,000,000 men to the Confederate colors in the spring of 1861, what advantage would it have been? He could not have armed them, even if he could have fed and clothed and transported them.

2. The fact must not be overlooked that by May, 1862, the Northern Armies were in permanent occupation of middle and west Tennessee, nearly the whole of Louisiana, part of Florida, the coasts of North and South Carolina, southeastern Virginia, much of northern Virginia, and practically the whole of that part of Virginia known as Western Virginia. The population thus excluded from the support of the Confederacy may be estimated conservatively at 1,200,000, leaving 3,800,000 to bear the burden of the war. Hence the estimate of the arms-bearing population in 1862, when the real tug began, would be, according to the accepted ratio, not 1,000,000, but 760,000. Of this number, one-fifth would be regularly exempt, i. e., 152,000; and many thousands more were detailed for various branches of industry. Doubtless during the first year thousands entered the Confederate Army from this territory—a fair proportion of the 340,000 on the muster rolls in March, 1862; but the conscript law could not operate, never did operate—in this fourth of the Southern territory.

3. The seceded States (including West Virginia)

furnished the Northern Armies, according to the returns of the War Department, 86,000 men. The records of the War Department show a total of white soldiers from all Southern States, including Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, West Virginia, Delaware and District of Columbia, of 295,481.

4. It must be remembered that while the unanimity with which the Southern people supported the war has perhaps never been surpassed in so large a revolution, yet there was a large element of disloyalty, especially in the mountainous regions of the South. For instance, in the Valley of Virginia there were large numbers of Quakers and Dunkards, all opposed to war. There were also in that region the numerous descendants of the Hessian prisoners, who were not in sympathy with us. The number of Union men in the South who did not take up arms has been estimated at 80,000.

5. It must also be remembered that "there was also an element of baser metal,—men who begrudged the sacrifice for liberty and shirked danger."

6. It has been said that the Confederate States passed the most drastic conscript law on record—which may be true; but it is a mistake to suppose that this law was successfully executed. Thus, Gen. Cobb writes, December, 1864, from Macon, Georgia, to the Secretary of War: "I say to you that you will never get the men into the service who ought to be there, through the conscript camp. It would require the whole army to enforce the conscript law if the same state of things exists throughout the

Confederacy which I know to be the case in Georgia and Alabama, and I may add Tennessee." (W. R., series 4, vol. 3, p. 964.)

Again, H. W. Walters, writing from Oxford, Mississippi, to the Department, December, 1864, says: "I regard the conscript department in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi as almost worthless." Yet again Gen. T. H. Holmes reports to Adjutant-Gen. Cooper as to North Carolina, April 29, 1864: "After a full and complete conference with Col. Mallett, commandant of conscription, . . . I am pained to report that there is much disaffection in many of the counties, which, emboldened by the absence of troops, are being organized in some places to resist enrolling officers." And Gen. Kemper reports, December 4, 1864, that in his belief there were 40,000 men in Virginia out of the army between the ages of eighteen and forty-five. (W. R., series 4, vol. 3, p. 855.)

In support of his thesis that the whole military population was enrolled in the Confederate Armies Col. Livermore quotes a letter of Gen. Lee, urging the necessity of "getting out our entire arms-bearing population in Virginia and North Carolina." But this letter, written October 4, 1864, six months before the surrender, is strong evidence that up to that time the stringent conscript laws had failed to get out even in Virginia and North Carolina, "the entire arms-bearing population."—(Livermore, *Numbers and Losses*, p. 17.)

Col. Livermore quotes another letter of Gen. Lee,



dated September 16, 1864, in confirmation of his opinion that the conscription laws were thoroughly enforced, in which Gen. Lee speaks of the "imperious necessity of getting all our men subject to military duty in the field"; but we must note that the General adds, "*I get no additions.*" (*Id.*, p. 17.) Is that statement consistent with the rigid and successful enforcement of the conscript law? Is it not rather the most conclusive evidence that it was not successfully enforced? Or is our Bœotian wit so dull that we cannot see the point? If so, we pray to be enlightened!

The statement is often made that the Confederate Conscription embraced all white males between 16 and 60 years of age. This is an error. The first Act, April 16, 1862, embraced men between 18 and 35 years; the second, of September 27, 1862, men between 18 and 45 years; the third and last, of February 17, 1864, men between 17 and 50. Both Gen. Adams and Col. Livermore acknowledge this. Yet the latter rests his argument on the supposition that the Conscription gathered in all males between 16 and 60 years.

In further illustration of this subject, I may point out that one of the difficulties confronting the conscript officers was the opposition of the governors of some of the States, notably the Governor of Mississippi, the Governor of North Carolina, and the Governor of Georgia. Thus the doctrine of States Rights, which was the bedrock of the Southern Confederacy, became a barrier to the effectiveness of

the Confederate Government! South Carolina passed an exemption law which nullified to a certain extent the conscript laws of the Confederacy, and Governor Vance of North Carolina proposed "to try title with the Confederate Government in resisting the claims of the conscript officers to such citizens of North Carolina as he made claim to for the proper administration of the State."

"The laws of North Carolina," Gen. Preston complains (W. R. 4, 3, p. 867), "have created large numbers of officers, and the Governor of that State has not only claimed exemption for those officers, but for all persons employed in any form by the State of North Carolina, such as workers in factories, salt-makers, etc."

"This bureau has no power to enforce the Confederate law in opposition to the . . . claims of the State."

Gov. Brown of Georgia forbade the enrollment of "large bodies of the citizens of Georgia."

The number is supposed to have reached 8000 men liable to Confederate service. Gen. Preston complains in like strain of the action of the Governor of Mississippi.

There is an important report by Gen. Preston in February, 1865 (W. R. 4, 3, pp. 1099-1111). In this he gives the number of exemptions allowed by the Conscript Bureau in seven States, and parts of two States, east of the Mississippi as 66,586.

He then gives the agricultural details, details for public necessity, and for government service, con-

tractors and artisans, a total of 21,414—the whole aggregating 87,990 men.

In another report, already referred to, November, 1864, he gives the number of State officers exempted on the certificates of governors in nine States as 18,843. This, with the preceding, makes a grand total of 106,833.

These are exemptions under the Confederate States' law in seven States, and in parts of two States. They do not include the States west of the Mississippi. But in addition to these there were many thousand exemptions under purely State laws. We have no complete record of these last; but in the State of Georgia alone we have a record of 11,031 such exemptions.

7. We must also consider the large numbers of men employed on the railroads, in the government departments, in State offices, and in the various branches of manufacture necessary for the support of the Army and of the people; and in directing the agricultural labor of the slaves. Factories were started for making swords, bayonets, muskets, percussion caps, powder, cartridges, cartridge boxes, belts, and other equipment; for clothing, for caps and shoes, for harness and saddles, for artillery-caissons and carriages; for guns, cannon and powder.

We may also refer to the statement of Gen. Kemper that in December, 1864, "the returns of the bureau, obviously imperfect and partial, show 28,035 men in the State of Virginia between eighteen and forty-five exempt and detailed for all causes." The South

having an agricultural population, it was necessary, as just said, when war came, to organize manufactories of every kind of equipment for the Army.

After all, the most important question to determine is the number of men actually serving with the colors in the armies of the Confederate States. And even if we admit an enrollment in the Confederate Army of 700,000, and reduce our estimates of exemptions and details for special work from 125,000 to 100,000, there remain apparently for service in the field only about 600,000 men; and that, I suppose, is what Gen. Cooper and other Southern authorities had in mind.

We know approximately the respective numbers in the great battles of the war, and we submit that these numbers are far more consistent with the maximum of 600,000 serving with the colors than with the maximum of 1,200,000.\* If, indeed, the Confederacy had been able to muster in arms 1,200,000 men, it is greatly to the discredit of their able generals that never in any one battle were they able to confront the enemy with more than 80,000 men.

\* Thus, to quote that able and expert authority Gen. Marcus J. Wright: Battles around Richmond (1862), Lee, 80,835; McClellan, 115,249. At Antietam, Confederates, 35,255; Federals, 87,164. At Fredericksburg, Confederates, 78,110; Federals, 110,000. At Chancellorsville, Confederates, 57,212; Federal, 131,661. At Gettysburg, Confederates, 64,000; Federals, 95,000. At the Wilderness, Confederates, 63,981; Federals, 141,160.

## THE MILITARY POPULATION OF THE CONFEDERACY

In the month of May, 1862, as we have shown above, at least one-fourth of the Southern territory had been wrenched from the control of the Confederate Government. In the territory remaining there was in round numbers a population of about 3,800,000 souls. The military population then should have been 760,000.

To this must be added, by the extension of the military age down to 17 and up to 50, 10 per cent—that is, in all, six additional years, 76,000.

Then we must make a further addition (adopting Gen. Chas. Francis Adams' ratio), for youths reaching military age in four years, of 12 per cent of the military population, or 91,200 men. This, with the age extension addition—76,000—makes a total of 167,200 which, added to the original estimated population of 760,000, makes a grand total of 927,200.

To this number Mr. Adams would add the men furnished by the Border States to the Confederate Army, viz. (as is alleged), 117,000, a grand available total of 1,044,200.

But this estimate of 117,000 men furnished the Confederate Army by the Border States (Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri) cannot be relied upon as even approximately accurate. For example, it included 20,000 men alleged to have been furnished by the State of Maryland. But a careful examina-

tion of all the Maryland organizations, including several companies in Virginia regiments, gives a total of only 4580 from the State of Maryland.

To sum up this part of the argument: Let it be granted that there was an available military population, first and last, in that part of the Confederacy not occupied by the Federal Armies, of 927,200, to which may be added volunteers first year of war from territory occupied by Federal forces after May,

1862.....	85,000
And also men from Border States.....	75,000
	<hr/>
Aggregate.....	1,087,200
	<hr/>

Deductions from this as follows:

Natural death rate in two and one-half years, before being enrolled in Army, $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.....	11,055
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Southern men from Confederate States in U. S. Army.....	55,000
Disloyal, estimated.....	80,000

Exempt for physical and mental disability:

Twenty per cent of the whole (after deducting the two previous items), viz., 782,200.....	158,440
	<hr/>

	304,495
Leaving available aggregate.....	782,705
	<hr/>

Aggregate.....	1,087,200
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Now let us remember that out of this available aggregate (exaggerated though we believe the number to be), there had to be created for the service of the Confederate States three armies,—an army of soldiers, an army of civil servants and an army of industrial and agricultural workers. If we put the strength of the fighting army at 620,000, there will remain for the other two armies 162,000 men,—and we have seen grounds for believing that there were 40,000 soldiers detailed for special work, and 120,000 exempt as State officers, workmen in various occupations, agricultural and necessary purposes, mechanics, railway servants, etc. And it may be asked with confidence whether for all these manifold purposes 162,000 men can be considered an excessive or unreasonable number? To support the army in the field, to equip the civil governments of eleven great States, and to supply the life blood of civilization in a country of such vast extent as the Southern Confederacy, necessarily absorbed the energies of a great number of men.

Finally consider the following record:

Officers and men in all the Confederate Armies,  
February, 1865:

Aggregate for duty . . . . .	160,000
Aggregate present and absent.	358,000

(W. R. iv, iii, p. 1182).

Gen. Marcus Wright, an expert authority, estimates the strength of the Confederate Armies *at the close of the war*, thus:

Present.....	157,613
Absent.....	<u>117,387</u>

Total..... 275,000

And of the Union Army thus:

Present.....	797,807
Absent.....	<u>202,700</u>

1,000,507

Compare also the fact that there were mustered out of the Union Army at the end of the War 1,034,000 men, and in all the Confederacy there were surrendered Confederate soldiers to the number of 174,000 only, and this included all paroled men in hospitals or in the homes, as well as those in armies.

No wonder Lee wrote to Early shortly after the war, "*It will be difficult to get the world to understand the odds against which we fought.*"

Reviewing the whole record we may still claim for the Armies of the Southern Confederacy the encomium passed by Virgil nearly two thousand years ago: "*Exigui numero, sed bello vivida virtus.*"

Light is shed upon the question of the numerical strength of the Confederate Armies by a consideration of the numbers in the armies of the nations of Europe at the present time.

It will be conceded that the Southern States were not under greater pressure to put forth all their strength, than are the nations now at war. Now if Mr. Chas. Francis Adams' estimate of the number of men at the front in the South be taken as the



standard (*Military Studies*, p. 285-6) what should be the size of the armies of Belgium, France and England and Germany today?

That is to say, If the Confederate States, with a white population of 5,000,000, really mustered an army of at least 1,200,000 men, as Mr. Adams declares, what should be the size of the armies now contending in Europe, if the same proportion obtains?

Here is the answer:

Little Belgium, with a population of 7,000,000 should have an army of 1,680,000 men (she has perhaps 300,000 or possibly 400,000). Great Britain and Ireland with a population of say 45,000,000 should have an army of 10,800,000 (she has 5,000,000, of which about 1,000,000 come from her overseas colonies not included in the population given). France, with a population of say 40,000,000 should have an army of 9,600,000 (she may actually have 4,500,000). And Germany with a population of say 68,000,000 should have an army of 16,000,000 (does she even reach 8,000,000, exclusive of Austria's contingent?)

On the other hand if we accept as approximately correct the highest Southern estimate of the strength of the Confederate Armies, viz., about 650,000, and apply the same ratio to the countries just named, Belgium would muster 910,000; Great Britain (exclusive of her colonies), 5,850,000; France, 5,200,000, and Germany, 8,840,000.

These figures seem to furnish conclusive practical proof of the grave error of Mr. Adams' estimate.



## XI

### LEE AFTER THE SURRENDER

*"It is our duty to live."*—Robert E. Lee.

*"Abandon all these local animosities and make your sons Americans."*—Robert E. Lee.

*"I must abide the fortunes, and share the fate of my people."*—Robert E. Lee.

*"The death of a hero convinces all of Eternal Life; they are unable to call it a tragedy."*—A Student in Arms.

*"I think it wisest not to keep open the sores of the war, but to follow the example of those nations who endeavored to obliterate the marks of civil strife, and to commit to oblivion the feelings it engendered."*—Robert E. Lee.

*"I have a self-imposed task which I must accomplish. I have led the young men of the South in battle; I have seen many of them fall under my standard. I shall devote my life now to training young men to do their duty in life."*—Robert E. Lee.

## XI

### LEE AFTER THE SURRENDER

The story of Lee's life after the war is an epic in itself. Those five years are radiant with a serene light undimmed by one word or act which his devoted people would wish to blot from the record. As a commander, though the greatest of his time, he had made mistakes, which none would be more ready to acknowledge than himself; but as the uncrowned king of a defeated people,—as the exemplar and mentor to whom the people of the South looked for guidance and inspiration under the cruel conditions of the Reconstruction period, he committed no error that any keen-eyed critic has yet been able to discover.

Promptly and bravely he took the lead in counselling loyal submission to the government. Writing to Gov. Letcher he urged that "all should unite in an honest effort to obliterate the effects of the war and restore the blessings of peace." He advised "the healing of all dissensions." Again he writes:

I believe it to be the duty of every one to unite in the restoration of the country and the reestablishment of peace and harmony.

And what he advised others to do he did himself, setting a public example of submission to the

authority of the government by applying to President Johnson for amnesty and pardon. His military secretary, Col. Chas. Marshall, writes:

He set to work to use his great influence to reconcile the people of the South to the hard consequences of their defeat, to inspire them with hope, to lead them to accept, truly and frankly, the government that had been established by the result of the war, and thus relieve them from the military rule.

When some of the soldiers, encouraged to emigrate to Mexico by a decree of the emperor of that country, sought his advice he bid them remain in their homes and share the fate of their States. As we read his correspondence and listen to the accounts of his conversation given by those who were closest to him, we hear no word of repining at "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune"—no lamentations over his misfortunes—no complaint of the failures of his subordinates, or the inefficiency of the Confederate Government, which were jointly responsible for his final defeat after so many victories in the field. No, he resolutely turned away from the past, and set his face to the future. One thing absorbed his thoughts and his energies, the restoration and rehabilitation of his people,—the comfort and relief of the heroic men who had fought under his banner.

Even the harsh and cruel measures of Reconstruction scarcely draw from his lips a word of remonstrance. When indicted for treason, he declared himself ready to answer the charge and wrote to his

son, "We must be patient, and let them take their course."

The only record of any criticism of public men is the following:

"I never heard your father discuss public matters at all, nor did he express his opinion of public men. On one occasion I did hear him condemn with great severity the Secretary of War, Stanton. This was at the time Mrs. Surratt was condemned and executed. At another time I heard him speak harshly of Gen. Hunter."\* Hunter was a Virginian and had devastated his native state with fire and sword. This, and the hanging of an innocent woman, were the only events which, even in the familiarity of daily intercourse were sufficient to break that reserve which Gen. Lee had made his constant rule. Writing to Gen. Early he said, "I would recommend that you would omit all epithets or remarks calculated to excite bitterness or animosity between different sections of the country."

As to his own course after the surrender his son Capt. R. E. Lee writes, "My father had been offered houses, lands and money, as well as positions as president of business associations and chartered corporations."

The incident of the English nobleman who offered him a country seat in England and an annuity of £3000 is well known. His reply was simple and worthy of his noble soul, "*I must abide the fortunes*

\* Letter of Capt. Edmund Randolph Cooke.

*and share the fate of my people."* Equally characteristic was his answer to a proposal to head a colony which was to emigrate to Mexico:

The thought of abandoning the country and all that must be left in it is abhorrent to my feelings, and I prefer to struggle for its restoration and share its fate, rather than give up all for lost.\*

When offered the presidency of an insurance company at a princely salary he excused himself on the ground that he knew nothing of insurance business; and when he was told in reply that no duties would be required of him—nothing was asked but the use of his name, his answer was that his good name was about all he had saved from the wreck of the war, and that was not for sale. To another gilt-edged business proposition, he made this sublime reply:

I am grateful, but I have a self-imposed task which I must accomplish. I have led the young men of the South in battle; I have seen many of them die on the field; I shall devote my remaining energies to training young men to do their duty in life.†

At length, however, in August, 1865, came an offer which he was glad to accept—the offer to become the president of Washington College, Lexington, Va. The institution, founded in 1749, had suffered many vicissitudes and at this epoch “had reached the lowest point of depression it had ever known. Its

\* Jones' *Life of Lee*, p. 445.

† Quoted by his son.



buildings, library and apparatus had suffered from the rack and plunder of Hunter's soldiers. Its invested funds were for the time being unproductive and their real value most uncertain. It boasted four professors and forty students. It was very poor, indifferently equipped with buildings, and with no means in sight to improve its condition.\*

This was the institution which the soldier who had for years carried the destinies of a nation on his sword, and who was then and till he died the idol of the Southern people, was now asked to take under his care. It was characteristic of his lofty soul that Lee was not for a moment affected by the small and obscure position he was invited to fill, or by the pitiful salary the trustees were able to offer,—\$1,500 per annum.

Bishop Wilmer, of Louisiana, gives the following account of an interview with Gen. Lee when he came to tell him of the offer he had received:

I named other institutions more conspicuous which would welcome him with ardor as their presiding head. I soon discovered that his mind towered above these earthly distinctions; that in his judgment the *cause* gave dignity to the institutions, and not the wealth of its endowment or the renown of its scholars; that this door and not another was opened to him by Providence, and he only wished to be assured of his competency to fulfil his trust and thus to make his few remaining years a comfort and blessing to his suffering country. I had spoken to his human feelings; he had now revealed himself to me as one "whose life was hid with

\* See Capt. R. E. Lee's Life of his father, p. 180.

Christ in God." My speech was no longer restrained. I congratulated him that his heart was inclined to this great cause and that he was spared to give to the world this august testimony to the importance of Christian education. How he listened to my feeble words; how he beckoned me to his side as the fulness of heart found utterance; how his whole countenance glowed with animation as I spoke of the Holy Ghost as the great Teacher, whose presence was required to make education a blessing, which otherwise might be the curse of mankind; how feelingly he responded, how *eloquently* as I never heard him speak before—can never be effaced from memory; and nothing more sacred mingles with my reminiscences of the dead.\*

The journey to his new field of labor occupied four days on horseback. With what ambition he entered upon his duties as president of the college may be gathered from one of his letters:

Life is indeed gliding away, and I have nothing of good to show for mine that is past. I pray I may be spared to accomplish something for the benefit of mankind and the honor of God.

From September, 1865, until his death in October 12, 1870, he filled the office of president of Washington College, and gave himself to its duties with all the ardor of his noble nature. It is a rare phenomenon to see a man of fifty-eight years take up a new profession with the zeal of youth and attain such marked success as he did. He was no figurehead in the college but its active, vital head. In spite of his age he entered into every detail of administration, and

\* Quoted by Capt. R. E. Lee, p. 182.

soon gave a new impetus to every department of the institution. He was as laborious in his exertions in its behalf as he had been in planning and executing his great campaigns. It is evident that he regarded his new work as a calling from God—as a God-given opportunity to do a service to the young men of the South and to the Country.

His first care was to develop and equip the scientific departments. Three new chairs were added, physics, mathematics and modern languages, “with a subordinate classification of correlated studies, which embraced engineering, astronomy and English philosophy.” He planned also a school of commerce, and a chair of applied chemistry. Later the Lexington Law School was taken into the collegiate jurisdiction. His idea evidently was to give a practical direction to the education of the young men, in view of the peculiar needs of the young men of the South at that time. This did not imply, however, a lack of sympathy with the study of the classics, which he found already provided for.

Two very fundamental changes he soon introduced. The studies were made elective, and the system of discipline was placed on the principle of appealing to the honor and self-respect of the students,—banishing entirely the old method of espionage, so fruitful of evil in the relations between the young men and the faculty. “Young gentlemen, we have no printed rules. We have but one rule here, that every student be a gentleman.” In both these respects Gen. Lee was in harmony with Thomas Jefferson, who had

established the University of Virginia in 1824 broadly on the elective system and the honor system.

As he had known thousands of his soldiers by name, so now Lee was personally acquainted with every student in the college, and followed their course both in conduct and in their studies, with a personal, fatherly interest. "He weekly examined the reports of absences and failures in recitation, and retained clearly in his memory the standing of each student." Gen. Long tells a story which illustrates this: "When a certain name was called, Gen. Lee remarked in faculty meeting, 'I am sorry to see that he has fallen back so far in his mathematics.' 'You are mistaken, General,' said the professor, 'he is one of the very best men in my class.' 'He only got fifty-four last month,' was the reply. On looking at the report, it was found that there had been a mistake in the copying, and that Gen. Lee was correct according to the record.'"\*

The same writer gives an example of Gen. Lee's grave satire. Upon a visitor enquiring how a certain student was getting on, Gen. Lee replied, "He is a quiet orderly young man, but seems very careful *not to injure the health of his father's son*. He got last month only forty on his Greek, thirty-five on his mathematics, forty-seven on his Latin, and fifty on his English, which is a very low standing, as one hundred is our maximum. Now, I do not want our young men really to injure their health, *but I*

\* *Long's Memoirs*, p. 448.

*wish them to come as near it as possible.* This young gentleman, you see, is a long way from the danger line."

The college soon expanded from five professors and sixty students to twenty professors and four hundred students.

So toiled on this great soul in the obscure little mountain town in Virginia those last five years of his life,—with the same unwearied patience, with the same steady concentration of his energies, and with the same courageous determination to conquer, as when he was planning campaigns and fighting great battles as the mighty commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. It never occurred to his lofty soul that that oversight of a small college was beneath the dignity of one who had played so great a part on the world's stage, and who was still constantly receiving tokens of the admiration in which he was held by distinguished men in Europe, and of the love and devotion of the entire people of the South. He would have repudiated such a suggestion with indignation, even with astonishment. For he knew that he was pursuing an aim worthy the best endeavor of the greatest of men—to set before the people whom he loved a high standard of education, moral and spiritual as well as intellectual and practical—to send out from the halls of the college over which he presided year after year, a body of young men prepared to assist in building up the waste places of the South, and imbued with high principles of conduct. He knew the supreme value

of education conceived on those broad lines which include the culture of the soul as well as of the mind—that definition of education as “the Georgics of the mind” would have been held by him fatally defective—rather would he have defined it as “the Georgics of the whole man, body, mind and soul.”—He knew that each of the graduates of Lexington would be a missionary to some Southern community to preach that gospel of work which he saw was so greatly needed, and also that gospel of loyal acceptance of the results of the war, which alone could ultimately restore to the States of the South their place and their function as integral parts of the Union.

To quote the beautiful tribute of Mr. Bradford, “What counted with all these young men was his personal influence, and he knew it. In point of fact he was creating or recreating a great nation still. His patience, his courage, his attitude toward the future, his perfect forgiveness, his large magnanimity, above all, his hope, were reflected in the eager hearts about him and from them spread wide over the bruised and beaten South, which stood so sorely in need of all these things. I have referred in an earlier chapter to the immense importance of his general influence in bringing about reconciliation and peace. It is almost impossible to overestimate this.”\*

Undoubtedly he was during those last years devoting his tireless energies to restoring the unity of the nation.

\* *Lee the American*, p. 265.

His daily life was idyllic. All classes in the little community loved him. Beautiful incidents are told illustrating the magnetism he exerted over little children, as when a little girl appealed to him to induce her younger sister to go home, saying to her mother afterwards "I couldn't make Fan go home, and I thought *he* could do anything." Even the freed slaves always paid him every respect.

He was always solicitous for the promotion of religion in the college, and warmly encouraged the work of the Young Men's Christian Association. He showed more emotion than on almost any other occasion in expressing his fervent wish that the students should all become sincere Christians. He was a devout member of the Episcopal Church and a vestryman of the church in Lexington, but he was no dogmatist, and his interest was chiefly in the practical aspect of Christianity. As one of his biographers remarks, "his religion had a genuine catholicity of character." His soul was chiefly intent upon the essential, the fundamental truths of spiritual religion. It was while attending a vestry meeting of his church, held in a cold, damp room that he contracted the cold which resulted in his death.

That same disinterestedness which characterized his whole life was conspicuous during his last years, as when he declined to receive from the trustees of the college the gift of a handsome residence and also an annuity of \$3000 which they proposed to settle on his family.

His modesty and humility were as marked as his disinterestedness. Asked to furnish material for his biography, he writes, "I know of nothing good I could tell you of myself, and I fear I should not like to say any evil." Urged in 1867 to accept the nomination for Governor of Virginia, he firmly declined, believing it would be, in the state of public feeling in the nation, harmful to the interests of Virginia, adding, "If my disfranchisement and privation of civil rights would secure to the citizens of the State the enjoyment of civil liberty and equal rights under the Constitution, I would willingly accept them in their stead."

We have said that Gen. Lee's life in Lexington was idyllic. So it was externally, in the quiet and repose which he enjoyed, in the love and reverence that surrounded him as an atmosphere wherever he went, in the constant expressions of admiration and appreciation which came to him from many sources. But underneath all this,—unseen to men, there was a tragedy; his noble soul was agonizing under the burden of the sorrows and sufferings and humiliations of the Southern people. These pressed sorely upon him, a true crown of thorns, borne silently and uncomplainingly. Sometimes, however, the pain that he carried in secret for his people, found momentary expression, as when he wrote to his son, December 21, 1867.

"When I saw the cheerfulness with which the people were working to restore their condition, and witnessed the comforts with which they were sur-



rounded, a load of sorrow which had been pressing upon me for years was lifted from my heart."

The death of Gen. Lee was attributed by his physicians to moral causes. Though his serene soul gave no sign of the burden that was breaking down his physical strength, it was clear to those near to him that such was the fact. The end has been thus described by Col. Wm. Preston Johnston:

As the old hero lay in the darkened room, or with the lamp and hearth fire casting shadows upon his calm noble front, all the massive grandeur of his form and face and brow remained, and death seemed to lose its terrors and to borrow a grace and dignity in sublime keeping with the life that was ebbing away. The great mind sank to its last repose almost with the equal poise of health.

For the last forty-eight hours he remained unconscious, but out of the *penumbra* that enveloped his faculties came two significant words, "Tell Hill he *must* come up!" and then, as if the great soldier felt he must move to a heavenly camping ground, "*Strike the tent!*"

So calmly, and with the dignity that was characteristic of the man, closed the career of the greatest American of the nineteenth century, of whom Freeman, the historian, said he was worthy a niche in the temple of fame with Alfred the Great and Washington. Men may continue to say in their short-sightedness that his life was a failure. Weighed in the scales of moral achievement, it is seen to have been grandly successful. He and his gallant compatriots did not fail to make such a protest against

the aggressions of power upon the province of liberty as has filled the world with its echo. They did not fail in successfully arraigning by the potent voice of their superb valor and their all-sacrificing patriotism the usurpation of powers which by the Constitution were distributed to the States. We must remember that the dissolution of the Union was not what Lee and his men had chiefly at heart. Nor was the establishment of the Southern Confederacy their supreme and ultimate aim. Both the one and the other were secondary to the preservation of the sacred right of self-government. And we make bold to predict that the future historian will judge that while the armies of the North saved the Union from dissolution, Lee and the armies of the South saved the rights of the States within the Union.

But whether or not this prediction shall be justified by the event, this certainly no man can call in question: Though Lee did not succeed in conquering for the Confederate States a place among the nations of Christendom, yet he did, without seeking it, conquer for himself a place in the hearts of five millions of his countrymen in the South; he also conquered the admiration and esteem of a great company of high-minded men in the North, who had no sympathy whatever with the Southern Confederacy; and he so lived and fought and labored and died that the nations of the world have set him upon a pinnacle of fame whence envy and detraction can never cast him down.

Is it any wonder that his soldiers and his country-

men boldly challenge the world to produce from the annals of time another supreme soldier who was also such a supreme exemplar of Christian virtue, of spotless manhood, of high chivalry, of unselfish devotion to duty, as the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia? Few among the great captains of history have surpassed or even equaled his achievements in the field of war; but is there one among them all that can compare with this hero of the Southern Confederacy in purity of life, in steadfast lifelong devotion to a high ideal, in modest self-effacement, in freedom from selfish ambition, in sublime patience under adversity, in moderation in victory, in composure in defeat, in Christlike resignation?

As we range in thought through the ages of recorded history and compare Lee with the great soldiers of the world,—Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Henry V, Richard Cœur de Lion, Cromwell, Marlborough, Turenne, Frederick the Great, Wellington, Napoleon, Washington—if in military genius he may be judged of lesser stature than some of them,—some *few* of them—none of English blood,—yet how plainly he towers above them all in the virtues of pure manhood—Washington alone excepted!

Indeed where shall we find in history the philosopher, or the statesman, or the master of men that reaches the high plane of moral sublimity on which stands this modest Virginia soldier? Not Socrates, or Seneca, or Cato, or Pericles, or Marcus Aurelius; not Cromwell, or Pitt, or Fox, or Chatham, or Nelson,

or Jefferson, or Marshall, or Bismarck, or Moltke, or Cavour.

Marcus Aurelius, the stoic emperor, was a pessimist and a persecutor; Cato took his own life; even Socrates had his blemishes; Marlborough had a sordid love of money; Frederick the Great was a misanthrope and a pessimist; the habits of Pitt and Fox and Nelson were deplorable; Bismarck was a new Machiavelli,—we pass the others by. But of Lee no act of littleness, or selfishness, or self-seeking ambition is recorded, though he was no bloodless Cromwell but a man with a fiery soul.

His mortal remains sleep in the chapel of Washington and Lee University, where a Virginian artist has carved in pure marble an impressive effigy of the sleeping warrior. But if, as Pericles declared in one of his greatest orations, "*The whole earth is the sepulchre of illustrious men*," then the earth itself is his sepulchre, and through the ages to come the succeeding generations of mankind will continue to honor his memory.

Speak, History! Who are life's victors?  
Unroll thy long annals and say—  
Are they those whom the world called  
The Victors—who won the success of a day?  
The martyrs, or Nero? The Spartans  
Who fell at Thermopylæ's tryst,  
Or the Persians and Xerxes? His judges,  
Or Socrates?

## XII

### LEE'S SPIRITUAL LIFE

*"Lee had one intimate friend—God."—Gamaliel Bradford.*

*"A book (the Bible) in comparison with which all others in my eyes are of minor importance, and which in all my perplexities has never failed to give me light and strength."—Robert E. Lee.*

*"It is an advantage to have a subject like Lee that one cannot help loving. . . . I have loved him, and I may say that his influence upon my own life, though I came to him late, has been as deep and as inspiring as any I have ever known."—Gamaliel Bradford.*

*"From the bottom of my heart I thank Heaven for the comfort of having a character like Lee's to look at, standing in burnished glory above the smoke of Mammon's altars."—Morris Schaff.*

## XII

### LEE'S SPIRITUAL LIFE

We turn now from the story of Lee the great soldier, to the record of Lee the Christian man—from his public life to his spiritual life.

Undoubtedly the truest test of any man's Christian character is to be found in his home. "Is so and so a Christian?" some one asked of Whitfield. "How can I tell?" was the answer, "I never lived with him."

Lee's domestic life was not only beautiful, it was permeated with the unmistakable evidences of simple, unaffected piety. Whoever will read the charming volume given to the world by his son Capt. Robert Lee, *Recollections and Letters of Gen. Robert E. Lee*, will find a truly ideal picture of domestic happiness. The letters it gives us vibrate with his passionate love for his children and his deep and constant solicitude for their moral and spiritual welfare. He writes to one of his sons, "When I think of your youth, impulsiveness and many temptations, your distance from me, and the ease (and even innocence) with which you might commence an erroneous course, my heart quails within me, and my whole frame and being trembles at the possible result. May Almighty God have you in his holy keeping!"

This correspondence abounds in incidental refer-

ences which reflect his Christian faith. Naturally, without effort, without obtrusiveness or ostentation, his never-failing trust in God and submission to his will shines out in his intimate letters to the members of his family. Neither victory or defeat deflects his soul from its constant look upward to the Almighty disposer of events. While at Hagerstown, July 12, 1865, after the tremendous battle of Gettysburg, while confronted by Meade's great army in front and a swollen river behind him barring his retreat; and when disaster such as befell Napoleon at Beresina or Leipzig might have been feared, he writes a long letter to his wife about some family matters, and then refers to the situation of his army with its "communications interrupted and almost cut off," and adds, "I trust that a merciful God, our only hope and refuge, will not desert us in this hour of need, and will deliver us by His almighty hand that the whole world may recognize His power and all hearts be lifted up in adoration and praise of His unbounded loving kindness. We must, however, submit to His almighty will, whatever that may be. May God guide and protect us all is my constant prayer!"

When, after the surrender, Gen. Lee received through the Hon. Beresford Hope a handsome copy of the Bible from some English admirers, he wrote a letter of acknowledgment in which he refers to the Bible as "a book in comparison with which all others in my eyes are of minor importance, and which in all my perplexities has never failed to give me light and strength."



But Lee was not only a sincere and devout Christian, he was in the truest sense a Christian hero. He has a place of right in that noble army of the soldiers of Jesus Christ, who have done heroic service for God and man in their lives. And his right to such a place rests not upon any of his achievements done before the eyes of men, but rather to that spirit of self-renunciation, so often exhibited in his career whereby he turned away from honor and place and ease, and cast in his lot with his people in danger, in trial, in adversity.

We have seen how in the great crisis of his career when the supreme command of the Armies of the United States was tendered him, he declined the offer, although it must have presented a great temptation to him as a soldier. He loved the Union; if he had owned all the slaves in the South, he would gladly have given them all up to save the Union; he "recognized no necessity" for secession; he would have "forborne and pleaded to the end for redress of grievances, real or supposed"; he had a deep feeling "of loyalty and duty as an American citizen"; he was strongly attached to the Service to which he had devoted the best years of his life, and all the ability he possessed.

How strong then were the motives leading him to accept the brilliant offer! What a career it opened up to him! He knew the weakness of the South—he knew also the power and resources of the North—and knowing them, the ultimate victory of the North in the impending struggle must have seemed and at

that time did seem to him certain. Thus Victory—Power—Fame—Ambition—all lured him on and urged acceptance, but in vain. No selfish consideration could move him. No ambition could disturb his equilibrium. No promise of glory or promotion could swerve him from the path of duty as he saw it.

Deliberately he chose the weaker side—the side he foresaw would be defeated—the side which must bring him self-denial and loss and suffering and humiliation and failure. He would suffer with his people. Their lot should be his lot. If they failed, he would fail with them. If they sank to the earth in disaster, he would share their fate.

Turn we now to another example of Lee's self-renunciation. The impossible had happened; Lee had surrendered; his glorious battle flag was furled forever. The war was over.

What now should be the course of this man who had given all his genius, and all his marvellous energy to establish the Confederacy—and given it in vain? Doors of ease and comfort and honor opened to him across the sea. Should he accept them? Why not? Had he not done all that mortal man could do for the Southern people? Had he not sacrificed all he was, and all he possessed, on their behalf? Then why not leave the scene of his defeat and his losses, and rest in peace and quietness in Old England, where he was admired and revered almost as much as in the South itself?

No,—a thousand times no! Lee would not for-

sake his people in their dire calamity. If he could do no more for them, at least he could do this—he could suffer with them. And so again a great renunciation is made. This hero of faith turned away from a life of ease and chose a life of toil. He refused honor and accepted reproach. He turned his back on the luxurious homes offered him beyond the seas, and chose rather to suffer affliction with his people—in their poverty, in their disfranchisements, in all their dire calamities! He would share their sorrows. He would bear their burdens with them. They were his people still, and he would put his neck under the yoke imposed upon them—however grievous it might be.

But if he was to remain in the South, might he not accept some easy, lucrative post, with only nominal duties—and thus far at least consult his ease? You know that offers of such places were freely made him. Let him allow himself, for example, to be chosen a president of a great business enterprise with a princely salary and practically nothing to do. But again No! This royal soul turned resolutely away from all such offers. Once more the spirit of self-renunciation triumphed, and Lee chose a life of toil, and care, and self-denial. He accepted the presidency of Washington College in its day of small things when it was wrecked and almost ruined by the cruel hoof of war, at a salary which was, in fact, a mere pittance, and gave himself to the task of educating the young men of the South in a little mountain town, far from the haunts of men and the stir and clamor of the busy world.

Why? Because he loved his people. Because he saw that the education of their young men was the first and most pressing task of those trying times. Because he believed in the gospel of work, and would set an example to the Southern people to go to work with all their might to rebuild their shattered fortunes.

In all this we see the embodiment of the deepest principle of the religion of Jesus Christ. Christ, says the Apostle, "*died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves.*" It may be said of Robert E. Lee that not only in the great crisis of his life was the spirit of renunciation supreme, but that all through his life, from the day when he publicly gave himself to the service of God in old Christ Church, Alexandria, he lived not to himself but to God and his fellow men.

We do not think we are mistaken when we say that this Christ-like spirit of self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice contributed even more than his military genius to the greatness of Gen. Lee. It is this which gives so pure a lustre to his fame. We do not fear to say that neither William of Orange, nor Gustavus Adolphus, approach the height of moral grandeur that Lee attained, and for the reason that the lives of neither of them incarnated to the same extent as his did, the spirit of self-sacrifice. This virtue it was, which, superadded to his military genius, and his fortitude, and his intrepidity, and his heroic constancy, made him worthy a place in the temple of fame beside Alfred the Great. Without this, how-

ever admired and trusted he might have been by his soldiers, he would not have been *loved* as he was by every man in that incomparable Army of Northern Virginia.

Nor is this all. Great as Lee was in the eyes of the world at the close of the war, in spite of the fact that he had failed to establish the Confederacy, we affirm that his greatness shone with a far greater lustre when, five years later, his life came to its close.

The world would never have known the full stature of Lee's greatness, if he had succeeded in his Titanic task of establishing the Southern Confederacy. It was in defeat, and trial, and toil, and reproach, that his greatness stood revealed in its true proportions. If he was great in action, he was greater in suffering. If he was majestic as he led his legions to victory in so many bloody fields of battle, he was yet more majestic when he led his defeated and impoverished people in the path of submission to the will of God and obedience to the laws of the United States,—harsh and unjust as all men now acknowledge that they were. He had been their idolized leader in war,—he was still their leader in time of peace,—or rather in that new conflict now precipitated upon the Southern people (so much more bitter than flagrant war) in which patience and forbearance and self-control were the weapons to be employed. As he had given himself without stint to the soldiers in the camp and on the field of carnage, so now he gave himself without reserve with all his powers to his people in meeting the hard conditions of their lot, in bearing

the bitter yoke of those cruel years of what was falsely called "Reconstruction."

His sublime task now was to "reconcile his people to the consequences of defeat, to inspire them with hope, to lead them to accept freely and frankly the government that had been established by the result of the war, and thus relieve them from military rule." Nobly he addressed himself to the task, and nobly his people responded. In *this* great emprise Lee did not fail, and the future historian will recognize the services he rendered the South those last five years of his life as the greatest he ever rendered.

It was not only that his sublime example taught them patience and fortitude under calamity and injustice, and self-restraint under bitter provocation; but he inspired them with the resolve to put away repining at "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," and go to work with courage and determination to build up the waste places of the South. Lee preached "the gospel of work" as well as "the gospel of Reconciliation." His life and example were the real forces that made for Reconstruction and the Restoration of the Union.

And if today the South is strong and prosperous and rich, holding her place in the Union by as firm a tenure as the North, it is due, more than to any other one influence, to the compelling power of the life and example of Robert E. Lee from 1865 to 1870, informed as they were, always and everywhere, by the Christ-like spirit of self-sacrifice.

But greater than this public service to his people was the influence of his example as a sincere and unaffected Christian.

The light of his faith and of his consistent Christian life shone like a beacon on the mountain top all over the land.

He had always led a pure and blameless life. The searchlight of investigation reveals no moral crisis in his career, as was the case with Stonewall Jackson when he turned from a life of sin and self-indulgence to a life of righteousness; no moment when it could be said of him as of the hero of Agincourt,

Consideration like an angel came,  
And whipp'd the offending Adam out of him.

No, from the day when a boy of eleven he became his widowed mother's mainstay in the home in Alexandria, Robert E. Lee appears to have led a life without spot, or stain, or flaw. But Lee knew himself too well, and had too just an appreciation of the standard by which man must be judged by his Maker, to build his spiritual confidence on the purity of his life or the strictness of his morality. In his four years at the Military Academy at West Point he never received a demerit or a reprimand, and so nearly faultless was his career that we may point to him as a model and exemplar to all the ages of man.

But Lee saw too clearly into his own heart, and knew too well the strictness of God's Law, to place his hope and his confidence in his own righteousness. No, he felt his weakness, he realized his unworthiness,

and he put his trust—his whole trust—for eternal salvation in the merits of his Redeemer. Some time in the year 1863, when told of the prayers that were offered for him at the religious services in the different camps, he said with emotion, "I sincerely thank you for that, and I can only say that I am a poor sinner, trusting in Christ alone, and that I need all the prayers you can offer for me."

May we be permitted to say that this evangelical faith of Robert Lee—this meek and lowly trust in Jesus Christ and Him crucified—is the key to his character. He was not a second Marcus Aurelius—the noble stoic, the sad-hearted royal philosopher. No, he was a Christian—a Christian optimist. If ever a pessimistic view of life might have been excused, it was to a man situated as Lee was at the close of the war. But no, he was always hopeful. When evil or misfortune came he was wont to say "it will eventuate in some good that we know not of now." And again, "Some good is always mixed with evil in the world." He believed, as the poet says:

There is some soul of goodness in things evil  
Would men observingly distil it out.

That was his strong anchor in the stormy days of "Reconstruction," when the whole horizon was black with trouble.

To the fortitude of the stoic he added the hopeful faith of the Christian: "We cannot help it," he wrote in a time of affliction, "and we must endure it." "We must exert all our patience, and in His own good



time God will relieve us, and make all things work together for good, if we give Him our love and place in Him our trust."

Throughout his campaigns he ever expressed, in his confidential correspondence with the members of his family, his unfailing trust in the providence of God. And in the hour of victory he gave God all the glory:

Being free from vainness and self-glorious pride,  
Giving full trophy, signal and ostent,  
Quite from himself to God.

That correspondence reveals him as a man who lived in the presence of God; who looked to God continually for guidance and strength; whose mind and heart were saturated with faith and trust in God. We see him a man of prayer in the midst of his campaigns, "My supplications continually ascend for you, my children and my country." Referring to a gallant soldier very dear to him, he utters the aspiration that "God would cover him with His Almighty Arm, and teach him that his only refuge is in Him, the greatness of whose mercy reacheth into the heavens, and His truth unto the clouds."

That correspondence brings out also most clearly that this indomitable soldier, "the terrible Lee," was at heart a man of peace. War, of which he was so supreme a master, was to him abhorrent, only possible as a dire necessity, in defense of home and fire-side. After his great victory over Burnside at Fredericksburg, we find (see his letters) no trace of

exultation over his triumph, but only such utterances as these, "What a cruel thing war is—to fill our hearts with hatred instead of love for our neighbors, and to devastate the fair face of this beautiful world!"

It is characteristic also that to the eye of this great captain "the sublimest sight of war" was not the column of dauntless men charging, as Pickett's Division charged of Gettysburg, but "the cheerfulness and alacrity" of his shivering, barefooted soldiers "in pursuit of the enemy under all the trials and privations to which they were exposed."

I do not know in all history a finer example of the broad distinction that exists between the virtues of the stoic and those of the Christian than is afforded by the life and character of Lee.

Take for example two characteristics which were strongly marked in him, especially in his later life, I mean his humility and his forgiveness of injuries. These would not have been considered virtues at all by the stoic, but they hold a prominent place in the category of Christian virtues.

What a supreme evidence it was of the grace of God that such a man as Gen. Lee should have achieved the grace of humility. The man whom Gen. Lord Viscount Wolseley describes as the most kingly man he ever saw—the man of whom Stonewall Jackson said, "Lee is a phenomenon. He is the only man I would follow blindfold"—this man was "clothed with humility." Yes the modesty which distinguished him from boyhood ripened in his later years

into a genuine Christian humility, as beautiful as it is rare. Under any circumstances this grace is difficult of attainment, and *is* attained, it is to be feared, by very few. But for one possessing such shining qualities of mind and person—distinguished and honored through his whole life—in the latter part of his career occupying the very pinnacle of fame, and (what was far more glorious) reigning still in the hearts of his people when defeat and failure had overtaken him, when his banner was furled, and his sword sheathed forever—for such a man to be clothed with humility would seem a marvel, and that he *was* so, shows how mightily the grace of God had wrought within him.

Equally wonderful is it to note his meek and quiet endurance of misrepresentation, his refusal to exonerate himself, though justly, at the expense of others. And then see how this king of men put in practice the precept of Jesus Christ. "I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, . . . and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Of this I give a single illustration. Not long after the surrender the government decided that Lee should be indicted for treason in the U. S. Court, and a gentleman in Richmond was requested to communicate the fact to him. In doing so, the gentleman expressed his indignation, whereupon Gen. Lee rose, and taking his hand said with a gracious smile, "We must forgive our enemies," and then added, "I can truly say that not a day has passed since the war began that I have not prayed for them."

And now we wish to invite attention to a fact of deep interest in the study of this great man's character. It is this: Parallel with the unfolding of his greatness as a military leader, as a commander of armies, as a devoted patriot, as a model of all manly virtues, proceeded also the unfolding of his *piety*. As in the other aspects of his character, so in its *religious* aspect also, there was "a shining more and more unto the perfect day."

What is the inference, the necessary inference to be drawn therefrom? It is this: The secret of his transcendent greatness is to be found in the fact (to use the language of Jefferson Davis) that "this good citizen, this gallant soldier, this great general, this true patriot, had yet a higher praise than this, or these,—*he was a true Christian.*"

We can frame no satisfactory philosophy of his life except on the principle thus happily enunciated by his illustrious friend. The last ten years of his life are crowded with instances of sublime self-abnegation, patience, meekness, humility, resignation. Whence, we ask, had this man these things? Whence did he draw the inspiration for such grand moral victories? Came it from earth or from Heaven? from man or from God? from philosophy or from religion?

There can be but one answer. These traits of character—contempt of glory, meekness under injuries, forgiveness of enemies,—are not inculcated by human philosophy, are not recognized in "the code of honor among gentlemen," are even repudiated as

mean and unmanly by the world; while on the other hand they *are* inculcated by the Religion of Jesus Christ (which Lee professed) and by that only. Can there then be any other inference save that Christianity supplied the unseen but mighty power which lifted Lee in the sphere of moral greatness so far above most of the great captains of history; that he drew the inspiration for these his greatest achievements from Heaven, not from Earth; that it was divine grace and not nature that made his life so sublime? He has been called by one of his eulogists "the man who has strengthened our faith in our race by the lofty height to which his own great nature so easily bore him." Such an estimate must be pronounced radically wrong; it is based on a philosophy which utterly fails to account for the phenomena of his life. From this point of view his character would remain an insoluble enigma. We may say also that it is one which he himself would have utterly repudiated. His whole demeanor and conversation declared that he did not ascribe his virtues to "his own great nature" but to divine grace. "By the grace of God, I am what I am," is the language of his life.

A far higher, and a juster, encomium than the one just quoted, would be to say of him:

"Gen. Lee was a man who strengthened the faith of mankind in the religion of Jesus Christ by the sublime heights to which Divine Grace so easily bore him."

This, in our judgment, was the greatest, though not the most conspicuous, service that Lee rendered his people.

Men will continue to differ peradventure for generations, in their estimate of his career in its public and political aspect, but there is today a truly remarkable unanimity in the sentiments entertained by his countrymen, both North and South, concerning the personal character and the Christian virtues of this heroic man.

His sword was sheathed at Appomattox in defeat,—the Confederacy which he had sustained by his genius and his heroic constancy, fell with him to rise no more—his battle flag was furled that day forever. From that hour it was a conquered banner, and he a conquered chieftain.

But today he who was conquered at Appomattox stands forth a conqueror, crowned with laurels as untarnished as ever decked the brow of man. He has conquered the hearts of the American people. Their respect and admiration are his. North and South united the other day on the field of Gettysburg in paying admiring tribute to his memory.

The sign of the Cross was upon his life—especially upon all that epoch of lowly and inconspicuous labor for the young men of the South, as president of Washington College. He bore on his heart the burdens and the sorrows of his people, and inspired them by his example to patience and constancy in bearing the heavy cross the cruel times had laid upon their shoulders. He bade them remember in their darkest

hour that "human virtue should be equal to human calamity," and this noble sentiment he illustrated in his daily life under the pressure of trials and anxieties that entered like iron into his soul, till at last his mighty heart was broken by the burden, and as he had lived, so he died for his people.





## APPENDIX



# The Gettysburg Campaign

*Parts of an Article in the "Southern Historical Society Papers,"  
January, 1915*

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## I. PRELIMINARY STRATEGY

On the 12th of June, 1863, Gen. Joe Hooker with his great host of 130,000 men, lay encamped on the Stafford Heights, on the Rappahannock River, opposite Fredericksburg, within sixty miles of the Capital of the Southern Confederacy.

Two weeks later this splendid army under its gallant leader is on Pennsylvania soil marching north to intercept Lee's army, which is moving on Harrisonburg on the Susquehanna River.

Richmond has been relieved: scarcely a Federal soldier remains upon the soil of Virginia; and the burden of war has been transferred from that battle-worn State to the shoulders of the State of Pennsylvania.

It is Washington now, not Richmond, which is threatened! Here surely is a great military achievement—and it has been accomplished without fighting a pitched battle, in fact, with insignificant loss to the forces of the Confederate chieftain.

In studying the Gettysburg campaign I ask you to note this splendid result of Lee's masterful strategy—the great army of Gen. Hooker drawn a hundred and thirty miles north, clear out of Virginia and across the State of Maryland into Pennsylvania,—by the sheer force of strategy.

Observe then that in the primary purpose of this campaign, the relief of Virginia from the presence of war, Lee was successful.

I cannot proceed to the story of the battle itself without calling your attention to an important feature of Lee's plan of campaign which is apt to be overlooked. I mean his purpose that Gen. Beauregard should be ordered to Culpeper Courthouse, Va., in order to threaten Washington while Gen. Lee himself was marching into Pennsylvania. He believed that an army at that point "even in effigy," as he expressed it, under so famous a leader, would have the effect of retaining a large force for the defence of the capital, and diminishing by so much the strength of the army which would oppose him in Pennsylvania. The government at Richmond, however, was unwilling, or felt itself unable, to carry out this part of Lee's plan, though we now know there were certain brigades which were available for the purpose.

We touch here a fact of moment in forming an estimate of the military capacity of Gen. Lee: I mean that he was never in supreme command of the Confederate armies until a few weeks before the close of the war, when it was too late. Field Marshal Lord Wolseley remarks that for this reason we can

never accurately estimate the full measure of Lee's military genius.

## II. THE INVASION OF PENNSYLVANIA—MOVEMENT OF THE CAVALRY

I come now to consider the second stage of the Gettysburg campaign, the actual invasion of Pennsylvania.

Seldom has an army entered upon a campaign under more hopeful auspices. The victories of Fredericksburg, December, 1862, and of Chancellorsville the following May, had inspired the Army of Northern Virginia with confidence in itself and with renewed faith in the genius of its great commander. It had been strengthened by the return of the two divisions of Longstreet's corps. It had been skilfully reorganized. In a word, it was the finest army Lee had ever commanded, although not the largest; better equipped and armed than ever before; thoroughly disciplined. The organization of the Confederate artillery has been pronounced by distinguished Federal authorities "almost ideal"; although it was far inferior in number of pieces and weight of metal to the artillery of the Union Army. Col. Fiebeger, Professor of Engineering at the U. S. Military Academy, says: "If the differences of the two armies are fairly weighed, the chances of success in the campaign about to be opened, were in favor of Gen. Lee, notwithstanding his numerical inferiority." Gen. Long, of Gen. Lee's staff, says: "The Army of Northern Virginia appeared

the best disciplined, the most high-spirited and most enthusiastic army on the continent. The successful campaign which this army had recently passed through, inspired it with almost invincible ardor."

Again, he says: "Everything seemed to promise success and the joyful animation with which the men marched north after the movement actually began, and the destination of the army was communicated to them, appeared a true presage of victory."

Gen. Lee himself said: "Never was there such an army; it will go anywhere and do anything if properly led." Upon which Chas. Francis Adams remarks: "This is not an exaggerated statement. I do not believe any more formidable or better organized force was ever set in motion than that which Lee led across the Potomac in 1863. It was essentially an army of fighters, and could be depended upon for any feat of arms in the power of mere mortals to accomplish; they would blench at no danger."

Nevertheless, in spite of these favorable auspices the campaign did not achieve victory. Why then did it fail? If any experienced soldier had been able to look down from a balloon, or an aeroplane, upon the advancing columns of Lee's army after they had crossed the Potomac, and were moving northward toward the Susquehanna, the reason of the ultimate failure of the campaign would at once have suggested itself. He would have said,—“where is the cavalry that should be marching on the right flank of the army?” And had he, a few days later, turned his eyes eastward and seen Stuart with his 5000 horse-

men marching through Maryland on the right flank of the Federal Army, entirely severed from communication with the Confederate Army, he could not but have been greatly astonished.

Lee's campaign in the opinion of the best European and American critics suffered from a fundamental error—the absence of the larger part of his cavalry with their skilful and intrepid leader, Gen. J. E. B. Stuart.

Major Steele, in his *American Campaigns*, says (p. 362): “Never did Lee so much need ‘the eyes of his army’ that were now wandering on a fool’s errand. Without his cavalry, his army was groping in the dark; he was in the enemy’s country and could get no information from the people. He did not know where Meade’s army was. All he could do was to concentrate his forces and be ready for a blow on either side.”

Gen. Lee’s own opinion on the subject is recorded by Gen. Long in his *Memoirs* (p. 275): “Gen. Lee now exhibited a degree of anxiety and impatience, and expressed regret at the absence of his cavalry. He said that he had been kept in the dark ever since crossing the Potomac, and intimated that Stuart’s disappearance had materially hampered the movement, and disorganized the campaign.”

Here then we have a sufficient reason for the failure of the Gettysburg campaign which had begun so auspiciously: *The major part of Lee’s cavalry did him no service whatever during the first week of the invasion.*

But why was it absent? Was Gen. Lee ignorant

of the importance of using his cavalry in screening his front, in reconnoitering, and securing information of the movements of the enemy? Such a supposition is absurd. On the other hand, knowing, and realizing as he must have done, the great importance of this use of his cavalry, did he fail to give his chief of cavalry the necessary orders to fulfil this function?

In other words, was Gen. Lee responsible for this fundamental mistake in his campaign? was it his intention to be separated from the bulk of his cavalry in his advance into Pennsylvania? To answer this question I direct your attention to the instructions given by Gen. Lee to Gen. Stuart. He wrote Gen. Ewell that he had instructed Gen. Stuart to "march with three brigades across the Potomac and place himself on your right and in communication with you; keep you advised of the movements of the enemy and assist in collecting supplies for the army." To Gen. Stuart himself Gen. Lee wrote, June 22: "You can move with the other three brigades into Maryland and take position on Ewell's right (Ewell was to march northward June 23d), place yourself in communication with him, guard his flank, keep him informed of the enemy's movements, and collect all the supplies you can for the use of the army. One column of Ewell's army will probably move towards the Susquehanna by the Emmitsburg route, another by Chambersburg."

This order was repeated in a letter to Gen. Stuart dated June 23d.



## III. MOVEMENTS OF THE INFANTRY \*

I turn now to the movements of the infantry of Lee's army. Ewell's corps moved northward from Hagerstown on the 23d of June, taking up the line of march for Chambersburg, and Carlisle, with Harrisburg as its objective. It reached Carlisle June 27th. Hill's corps crossed the Potomac on the 24th of June, and marched through Hagerstown and Chambersburg to Fayetteville, where it arrived June 27th. Longstreet crossed the Potomac on the 25th and 26th of June, and reached Chambersburg on the 27th.

Here let me call attention to Gen. Lee's Order No. 73, in which he charged his soldiers not to molest private property. "The duties exacted of us,"

\* Misfortunes due to absence of cavalry:

1. Failure to occupy Gettysburg.—(*Henderson.*)
2. Battle of first day and compulsion to fight an offensive battle the second.
3. Failure to pursue and destroy defeated enemy.
4. Flank march not feasible July 2d.—(*Henderson.*)
5. Had Lee known true situation of Union Army July 1st, Col. Fiebeger says he could have destroyed the 2d Federal Corps.—(*Gettysburg*, pp. 132-133).

(The Union army was under orders to move towards York, A.M., June 29th.)

Decisive victory possible for Lee had the cavalry done its part in ascertaining the position of the enemy.—(*Id.*)

The failure of Confederates to profit by their advantages, July 1st, was due to a single cause—defective information, due to the absence of the cavalry.—(*Id.*, p. 134.)

said he, "by civilization and Christianity are not less obligatory in the country of the enemy than in our own. The commanding general considers that no greater disgrace could befall the army and through it our whole people than the perpetration of the barbarous outrages upon the innocent and defenceless, and the wanton destruction of private property, that have marked the course of the enemy in our own country. . . . We make war on armed men and we cannot take vengeance for the wrongs our people have suffered, without lowering ourselves in the eyes of all whose abhorrence has been excited by the atrocities of the enemy, and offending against Him to whom vengeance belongeth."

This order of their noble commander was strictly obeyed by the soldiers of the Confederate Army. Again and again in this Pennsylvania campaign the citizens told us that we treated them far better than their own soldiers did. I can truly say I did not see a fence rail burned between Hagerstown and Gettysburg. What a contrast was presented in this respect to the armies of Napoleon of whom the historian says, describing one of the campaigns: "The Emperor's Army soon took to plundering the country wholesale, considering the vanquished as having no rights worth mentioning." Commenting on this, Count von Wartenburg says, Napoleon "could only reach his highest aims by demanding enormous efforts, and could exact this only by fanning all the passions of his soldiers, and permitting them to satisfy them. He could only conquer the world by aban-

doning its constituent parts to his instrument as their booty.”\*

What a sublime contrast to all this is presented by this Southern army of invasion! They performed deeds of arms equal to any achieved by the armies of Napoleon; they made marches as long, as arduous, and as rapid as any that his soldiers made; they endured hardships far greater than any endured by his army. But they did and endured all these things, not because their commander fanned the passions of his soldiers, and permitted them to satisfy these passions by abandoning the country and the people to plunder; but because of the pure spirit of patriotism that burned in their breasts. Where indeed in all the records of history shall we find an army that endured what Lee's Army endured, and achieved what it achieved, without reward, save the pitiful pay of \$11 Confederate money a month! It is when we contemplate these things that we realize how sublime was the spirit of devotion that animated the private soldiers of the Confederacy.

I have already said that Ewell's objective was the city of Harrisburg. Indeed this was the objective of the whole army. Both Gen. Early, marching through York, and Gen. Hill, crossing the South Mountain and passing through Cashtown, were instructed to cross the Susquehanna and move upon Harrisburg. Up to the evening of the 28th of June,

\**Napoleon as a General*, by Count Yorck von Wartenburg (pp. 310-11, 379).

the orders issued by Gen. Lee contemplated the concentration of his whole army at or near Harrisburg, but late that evening intelligence was brought which gave him his first information that Hooker had crossed the Potomac; that he had subsequently been relieved of the command of the Army of the Potomac by Gen. Meade; and that that officer, with his whole army, was marching rapidly northward. This occasioned a complete change in Lee's campaign. Orders were at once issued to Gen. Ewell at Carlisle to march southward and by him to Early at York to retrace his steps, marching southwest. The whole army was now to concentrate at or near Cashtown, which is on the eastern breast of the great South Mountain, eight miles west of Gettysburg. Here Lee hoped in a very advantageous position to fight a defensive battle. His three corps under Ewell, Hill and Longstreet were rapidly concentrating at the chosen point.

#### IV. FIRST DAY'S BATTLE

Let us now point out that the battle of Gettysburg was begun on the 1st of July without orders from Gen. Lee, and without his knowledge, and when, in fact, he was himself far away from the field. We have a letter of his dated Greenwood (about 9 miles west of Cashtown, and 17 miles west of Gettysburg), July 1st, 7:30 A.M., in which he gives certain directions to Gen. Imboden, then at Chambersburg; and adds, "my headquarters for the present will be

at Cashtown." At that very moment Lieut.-Gen. Hill was marching, without orders and on his own responsibility, from Cashtown to Gettysburg with his two leading divisions, under Heth and Pender, and his artillery. Thus Gen. Lee's purpose to fight a defensive battle, and to fight it at Cashtown, was frustrated by the unauthorized action of the commander of one of his corps.

Gen. Ewell, marching south from Carlisle for Cashtown, heard the noise of the battle, and turning the head of his column in that direction, came to Gen. Hill's assistance just in time to avert a serious disaster. Soon afterward Gen. Early, marching westward from York, came upon the ground, and threw his division promptly into action. Thus a great battle was joined, without orders, in which about 50,000 men were engaged; about half on the Confederate side and half on the Union side.\*

Gen. Lee and his staff, says Gen. Long, were ascending South Mountain on their way from Greenwood to Cashtown, when firing was heard in the direction

\* As to the numbers engaged in the battle of July 1st General Doubleday testified before the Congressional Committee (I, p. 309), that the two Federal Corps put into the fight not more than 14,000 men "to contend against two immense corps of the enemy, amounting to 60,000 men." What magnifying glasses Federal officers put on when they studied the size of the Confederate forces! Now General Butterfield testified that the First and Eleventh Corps mustered on June 10, 1863, together 24,000 men, and they had fought no battle since.—(See *Southern Historical Society Papers*, 1877, vol. IV, p. 83.)

of Gettysburg. This caused Gen. Lee some uneasiness; he first thought that the firing indicated a cavalry affair of minor importance, but by the time Cashtown had been reached the sound had become heavy and continuous and indicated a severe engagement.

This statement is confirmed by Gen. Pendleton.

I wish to emphasize the fact already stated that Gen. Hill's advance to Gettysburg on the early morning of July 1st was made entirely upon his own responsibility.

I will not enter upon a description of the battle of July 1st except to say that it opened unfavorably for Gen. Hill, in the defeat of the brigades of Archer and Davis of Heth's division. Gen. Archer with a large part of his brigade was captured. By the timely arrival of Rodes' division of Ewell's corps about 2 P.M. and subsequently of Early's division, the tide of battle was turned and the Confederates were victorious along the whole line. Fifty thousand men had been engaged in the battle—about equally divided between the contestants. For six hours the battle raged—in the morning favorably to the Federals, but, as already stated, victory ultimately perched upon the Confederate banners; 5000 prisoners were captured, including two general officers, not counting the wounded, and three pieces of artillery. Gen. Reynolds, esteemed the ablest commander in the Union Army, was killed. The Confederate victory was complete, but nothing like as complete as it would have been had a brigade of Stuart's cavalry been present

to reap the fruits of victory. As Capt. Battine says: "The want of 1000 lancers lost the Confederates the chance of destroying two Federal corps and capturing all their guns."

And now occurred a disastrous blunder. The victorious Confederates were ordered to halt.

Let me here transcribe the account given by Gen. Gordon himself, who says "the whole of that portion of the Union Army in my front was in inextricable confusion, and in flight. . . . The fire upon my men had almost ceased, large bodies of the Union troops were throwing down their arms and surrendering, because in disorganized and confused masses they were wholly powerless to either check the movement or return the firing. As far down the line as my eye could reach the Union troops were in retreat . . . in less than half an hour my troops would have swept up and over those hills, the possession of which was of such important and momentous consequence. It is not surprising that with the full realization of the consequences of a halt I should have refused at first to obey the order. Not until the third or fourth order of the most peremptory character reached me did I obey."\*

Gen. Lee, as I have already stated, did not arrive upon the field until the battle was nearly over. Gen. Long says: "Near the close of the action Gen. Lee reached the field." I myself saw him when he arrived, and watched him while he swept the horizon

\* *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, p. 153.

with his glass. He promptly sent one of his staff, Col. Walter Taylor, to Gen. Ewell, saying that from the position which he occupied he could see the enemy retreating over those hills, without organization and in great confusion; that it was only necessary to press those people in order to secure possession of those heights, and if possible he wished him to do this. Col. Taylor says: "Gen. Ewell did not express any objection, but left the impression upon my mind that the order conveyed to him would be executed." \*

It was then between 3 and 4 o'clock in the afternoon. At least three hours of daylight remained during which Ewell could have executed Gen. Lee's order. He did not execute it, however, although earnestly solicited to do so by Gen. Early, Gen. Gordon and Gen. Trimble. The last named officer was most urgent. "Give me a division," said he, "and I will engage to take that hill." When this was declined he said: "Give me a brigade and I will do it." When this, too, was declined he said: "Give me a good regiment and I will engage to take that hill." When this was declined the gallant Trimble threw down his sword and left Gen. Ewell's headquarters, saying that he would not serve longer under such an officer! He could do this because he had no command, and was acting as a volunteer aid. He participated gallantly in the great charge on the third day of the battle, in command of Pender's division, and was severely wounded and captured.

*\*Four Years with Lee, p. 95.*



Here then we find still another of Gen. Lee's lieutenants, the gallant and usually energetic Ewell, failing at a critical moment to recognize what ought to be done; failing also to carry out the suggestion and conditional order of Gen. Lee himself, although urgently solicited to do so by three of his subordinate generals. Had the advance upon Cemetery Hill been pushed forward promptly that afternoon we now know beyond any possible question that the hill was feebly occupied, and could have been easily taken, and thus Meade would have been compelled to retreat to the line of Pipe's Creek, or else would have been disastrously defeated. Gen. Gordon, in his *Reminiscences*, tells us that his heart was so burdened by the mistake of that afternoon that he was unable to sleep.

Was it not, indeed, extraordinary blindness to wait at the foot of Cemetery hill for 24 hours while the Federal troops were making their lines impregnable before the Confederate forces were led to the attack? Here then we have to record the failure of still another of General Lee's lieutenants, a fine and gallant soldier. No wonder Colonel McIntosh exclaims in his account of the battle, "A greater military blunder was never committed."

## V. SECOND DAY

The first of the three days' battle of Gettysburg had ended in a brilliant success for the Confederates; but it was a costly victory, for it compelled Gen. Lee

to accept the alternative of retreating or fighting; fighting on a field where the Federals had every advantage of position; where they must be assaulted at a great disadvantage whether on the right, or the left flank, or in the center. Whoever has visited the field will recognize the great difficulty of a concerted attack by the forces of Lee, and will also recognize that when Meade was attacked on one side of his line he could hurry troops easily and quickly from another part to its succor, because his position was like a horseshoe, or rather like a fishhook, and he held the interior line. And yet in my opinion Gen. Lee's decision to attack the Federal Army the next day was justified by the situation at nightfall of July 1st.

The enemy, to the number of about 25,000, had been defeated with great loss and driven from the field in great disorder; 5000 prisoners had been taken including several general officers; one corps had been almost annihilated, the finest officer in the Union Army had been killed. Lee's army was well concentrated, Longstreet's corps, except Pickett's division having bivouacked within four miles of Gettysburg; whereas a large part of the Federal Army was still far from the field (and Lee knew it). Moreover the key of the position, Little Round Top, was within Lee's grasp, if at least he might count on his orders being obeyed. Gen. Lee could not foresee that the first corps, then four miles from the field, would not be launched against Little Round Top until 4 P.M. next day, though two of its divisions were in position for attack at sunrise.

A conference was held that evening between Lee and his principal commanders on the left flank, at which it was decided that Longstreet should commence the battle the next day by a forward movement, having as its object the seizing of the commanding position on the enemy's left.

Gen. Early states that he left the conference with the distinct understanding (in which Ewell and Rodes agreed) that Longstreet should make the attack early next morning. Gen. Pendleton, chief of artillery, is on record as saying that Lee told him that night that he had ordered Longstreet to attack at sunrise. Hill, in his official report, says: "Gen. Longstreet was to attack the flank of the enemy and sweep down his line." A great deal of controversy has arisen upon this point, but the evidence given by a number of officers of high standing is so strong, that it is impossible to resist the conclusion that Longstreet was instructed to make his attack early in the morning. He himself, in his report, acknowledges that he was directed to attack "as early as practicable"; but he excused himself from doing so by saying that "he did not wish to go into battle with one boot off," referring to the fact that one of his divisions (Pickett's) had not arrived on the field.

Gen. Long says that on the evening of July 1st, Lee said to Longstreet and Hill: "Gentlemen, we will attack the enemy in the morning as early as practicable." That Lee himself expected the attack to be made early is certain; he was on the ground at daybreak July 2d, and showed some impatience at

Longstreet's failure to attack, saying to one of his officers: "Longstreet is so slow." Capt. Poague, of the artillery, in a letter addressed to Mr. Thomas Nelson Page, says that "at 9 A.M., southwest of Big Round Top, I ran across Gen. Lee riding through the woods. He said: 'Have you seen Gen. Longstreet or any of his troops in this neighborhood?' and expressed impatience and disappointment, adding: 'I wonder where Longstreet can be.'" Conclusive proof that Longstreet knew he was expected to attack at an early hour is found in the fact that both Hood and McLaws moved at daybreak and were in position to attack at sunrise.

As to the prospects of success had an attack been made early, the English military critic already referred to, Capt. Battine, says: "There can be no doubt that the opportunity was the brightest the Confederates had made for themselves since they let McClellan escape from the banks of the Chickahominy." "One-third of the Federal Army had been severely defeated; the remainder were concentrating with difficulty, by forced marches; a prompt employment of all his available forces would have placed victory within Lee's grasp. The resolution to attack was therefore sound and wise; the failure lay not in the plan but in the faults of execution which were caused to some extent by the want of sympathetic cooperation by the corps commanders."

Col. Henderson says that at daylight of July 2d there were no more than 40,000 men present on the Union front, and that the Confederate attack should

have been made at that hour. Only four of the seven corps of Meade's army were present and two of them had been roughly handled the day before. By eight o'clock two more had come up, making in all some 55,000 men. Longstreet's course must be pronounced inexplicable and inexcusable. Instead of cheerfully cooperating with the plan of his great leader, he undertook to argue the question; and Henderson says Lee lost the battle of Gettysburg because he allowed his second in command to argue instead of marching! The statement of Col. Henderson is confirmed by Major Steele in his well-known work on American campaigns. He says (p. 373), that at 7 A.M. the 6th Corps, and one-third of the 3d, and one-third of the 5th Corps were absent; at 9 A.M. the rest of the 3d Corps arrived; at 12 M. the rest of the 5th Corps; at 10:30 A.M. the artillery reserves under Hunt came up; not until between 4 and 6 P.M. did the 6th Corps come up, after a continuous march of 34 miles. He also says that Buford's Cavalry had been ordered to Westminster, and thus the left of the line was left uncovered. Longstreet's attack was not made until 4 P.M.,—although his troops began to move about 2 o'clock. Thus his attack was delayed until the whole Federal Army had arrived upon the ground and the golden opportunity of winning a great victory was lost.

There is, however, one feature of the drama on that fateful morning of July 2d which baffles all attempts at explanation. Gen. Lee knew, through

prisoners (Hist. Papers, 1877, vol. IV, p. 268), that only a portion of the Federal Army occupied the opposite ridge. "It is clear," says Henderson, "that an opportunity presented itself of dealing with the enemy in detail; and the meanest capacity must have grasped the advantage of storming the strong position south of Gettysburg before it should be occupied in overwhelming strength."

Yet he allowed Longstreet to argue against the assault, instead of making an immediate attack. That officer says "he went to Lee at daybreak, and renewed his views against making the attack. He seemed resolved, however."

But the thing that baffles us is this: Why did not Lee give Longstreet *then* absolute orders to advance to the attack? Hood and McLaws, with their splendid divisions, were in position at sunrise. Why did not Gen. Lee, knowing that every hour of delay was lessening the hope of success, launch those troops to the assault at once, in spite of Longstreet's objection?

It would seem that the mind of the great commander wavered, for he mounted his horse and rode over to confer with Ewell, on the left, to see if a successful attack could be made from that side, "not wishing," says Gen. Fitz Lee, "to *drive* his right corps commander into battle when he did not want to go." (p. 278.)

What a moment of fate it was! Gen. McLaws, sitting on his horse, could see the enemy coming, hour after hour, on to the battlefield. And he was con-

vinced that if permitted to advance "his command could reach the point indicated by Gen. Lee in half an hour."\*

Major Steele tells us the location of Meade's five corps at 7 A.M. the morning of July 2d. It appears that the 1st and 11th Corps were on Cemetery Hill; Wadsworth's division on Culp's Hill; the 12th Corps on the right of Wadsworth; the 2d Corps to the left of the 11th on Cemetery Ridge. "The 3d Corps was placed so as to prolong the line to the Round Top on

\* General Long tells us of a conversation he held with General Lee in the evening of July 1st, in which he said to General Lee, "In my opinion it would be best not to wait for Stuart. It is uncertain where he is, or when he will arrive. At present only two or three corps of the enemy's army are up, and it seems best to attack them before they can be greatly strengthened by reinforcements. The cavalry had better be left to take care of itself."—*Memoirs of R. E. Lee*, p. 278.

Hood says he was in front of the heights of Gettysburg soon after daybreak. General Lee was then walking up and down. "He seemed anxious that Longstreet should attack," says Hood. Longstreet said, seating himself near the trunk of a tree by his side, "The General is a little nervous this morning. He wishes me to attack. I do not want to do so without Pickett. I never like to go into battle with one boot off."—Fitz Lee's *Life of Lee*, p. 279.

McLaws says he was ordered to leave camp at 4 A.M., afterwards changed to sunrise; reached G. very early, halted head of his column a few hundred yards of Lee. Conference between Longstreet and Lee, former appeared irritated and angered. Believed he could reach point indicated by Lee in half hour. Saw the enemy coming hour after hour, on to the battlefield. Wilcox went into line on Anderson's right at 9. Seven hours after in same woods McLaws formed.—*Id*, p. 279.

the left." Thus there was *only one corps*, the 3d, on Meade's left, to oppose Longstreet's advance had it been promptly made. Buford's cavalry division, which had been posted near Round Top, had been ordered away, and *so the left of the line was left uncovered*. What a magnificent opportunity was thus offered to the Confederates, had Longstreet heartily cooperated with Lee in his purpose to make the attack at an early hour on the 2d! Gen. E. P. Alexander tells us that Longstreet was not *ordered* to attack until 11 A.M. This, although not intended to be such, is a misleading statement. Lee was not in the habit of giving written orders to his Lieutenant-Generals. He plainly indicated to Longstreet, as the testimony overwhelmingly shows, that the attack should be made on the left as early as practicable the next morning. When, however, Longstreet hesitated and objected and argued against it, he was at length compelled to issue a written order, and that was at 11 A.M. Even then victory was possible; but so apathetic was Longstreet that it was 3 P.M. before Hood's division in advance crossed the Emmitsburg road and moved against the enemy; 4 P.M. before he fired a gun. Now it was 4 o'clock before Little Round Top, 670 feet high, the key of the position, was (at the instance of Gen. Warren) occupied by a portion of the 5th Corps. The two brigades ordered to the spot arrived just in time to anticipate Hood's seizing the point.

It must be acknowledged, however, that "Hill and Ewell were also at fault, for they had been ordered



to cooperate with Longstreet's battle, but they limited their operations to an ineffective canonnading of the Federal entrenchments in front. Longstreet's attack began at 4; they did not begin their infantry attack until 6 P.M."

This second day's battle has been well described by Major Steele as follows: "On the part of the Confederates, a succession of tardy assaults, unsupported attacks, in which only one division, Pickett's, had not yet reached the field; and three others, Heth's, Pender's and Rodes', and four brigades had scarcely fired a shot. On the part of the Federals, a perfectly well arranged if passive defence in which every imperilled section of the line had been promptly reinforced and every assault of the enemy repulsed." (p. 378.)

It seems that among the Confederate leaders that day the coordinating faculty was paralyzed.

This failure of Gen. Longstreet to achieve what was expected of him differs vitally from the failures of Stuart, and Hill, and Ewell. Stuart committed a most serious error of judgment; Hill acted rashly and without orders; Ewell failed to perceive the golden opportunity that presented itself to him to seize Cemetery Hill; but there is no reason to doubt the loyalty of any of these three brave soldiers to their commander. This cannot be said of Gen. Longstreet; he displayed on this occasion an obstinate unwillingness to carry out the wishes of his commander; not only did he fail to move as early as practicable on the morning of July 2d against the

Federal left, but he sought Gen. Lee and objected to his plan and entered into an argument to convince him that it was faulty. Gen. Sorrell, who was his chief of staff, in his account of the battle says that "Longstreet did not want to fight on the ground or on the plan adopted by the General-in-Chief." He made determined objection. Gen. Sorrell (p. 166) says "he failed to *conceal some anger*," and he continues "there was apparent apathy that lacked the fire and point of his usual bearing on the battlefield." Warm as was Gen. Sorrell's admiration for Gen. Longstreet he cannot conceal his disapprobation at his delay; he says, "On the 2d, quite late, 4 P.M., Longstreet made his long-deferred attack on the enemy's left. . . . He gained ground rapidly and almost carried Round Top; but the morning delay was fatal. The enemy had been heavily reinforced while we were pottering around in sullen inactivity. Undoubtedly it was Lee's intention to make the attack in the forenoon, and support it by strong movements of Hill and Ewell." (p. 168.)

Had he made an early attack it is absolutely certain that he would have made himself master of the two Round Tops and that would have decided the battle. Had he even attacked promptly after 11 o'clock, when he acknowledges he received a *positive order* to attack, there is every reason to have anticipated success. Even at the late hour when he finally did make his attack, 4 P.M., Gen. Longstreet had an opportunity of seizing Round Top, but refused to embrace it. Scouts reported to Gen. Hood that

Round Top was unoccupied and that there were no troops in the rear. This intelligence was corroborated by prisoners. Hood sent three officers in succession to Longstreet to urge that he have permission to make the move on the Federal left which would give him Round Top, but he doggedly refused, saying that "Gen. Lee had ordered the attack to be made on the Emmitsburg road."

On this Col. Henderson says: "His summary message to the divisional commander to carry out the original plan at least lays him open to the suspicion that although he was prepared to obey, it was like a machine, and not like an intelligent being." Such conduct is deserving of the severest reprehension.

In endeavoring to defend himself from the criticism which his conduct on that occasion called forth, Longstreet assailed Gen. Lee (after his death) with a rancor which must be resented by every true Confederate soldier. In his book he declares that Gen. Lee made eleven capital mistakes in the battle of Gettysburg! (One mistake Gen. Lee certainly did make at Gettysburg—which, however, Longstreet does not mention—he did not relieve that officer of his command!) It cannot be denied that Longstreet's writings exhibit excessive self-esteem and sheer jealousy. We cannot forget, moreover, that had he obeyed Gen. Lee's orders he would have been at the battle of Chancellorsville with the fine divisions under his command, in which event Hooker's army might have been not defeated as it was, but actually destroyed.

Here let me quote a remarkable passage from the oration of Edward Everett at Gettysburg.

At the dedication of the Cemetery for Federal Soldiers killed at Gettysburg, Mr. Everett, in presence of President Lincoln, said: "And here I cannot but remark on the Providential inaction of the rebel army. Had the conflict been renewed by it at daylight on the 2d of July, with the 1st and 11th Corps exhausted by battle, the 3d and 12th weary from their forced march, and the 2d and 6th not yet arrived, nothing but a miracle could have saved the army from a great disaster. Instead of this, the day dawned, the sun rose, the cool hours of the morning passed, and a considerable part of the afternoon wore away without the slightest aggressive movement on the part of the enemy. Thus time was given half our forces to arrive and take their places in the lines, while the rest of the army enjoyed a much-needed half day's repose."

#### TO SUM UP THE EVENTS OF SECOND DAY

On the left Early had stormed and taken the works on Cemetery Hill, but, not being supported, had been repulsed. Further to the south, Hill had stormed another part of Cemetery Hill, with exactly the same experience.

On our extreme right Longstreet had lost the chance of seizing Round Top (755 feet), but had achieved notable success in the Peach Orchard and in Devil's Den, inflicting severe defeat on General Sickles.

On our extreme left in front of Culp's Hill (633 feet) a very important success had been achieved by Johnson's division. It is thus described in Gen. Lee's official report, "The troops of Gen. Johnson moved steadily up the steep and rugged acclivity under a heavy fire, driving the enemy into his entrenchments, part of which were carried by Steuart's brigade, and a number of prisoners taken." The position thus so hardly won was one of great importance. It was within a few hundred yards of the Baltimore Turnpike, which I think it commanded. Its capture was a breach in the enemy's lines through which troops might have been poured and the strong position of Cemetery Hill rendered untenable.\*

Gen. Howard, commander of the 11th Corps, says, "The ground was rough and the woods so thick that their generals did not realize until morning what they had gained." Dr. Jacobs says, "This might have proved disastrous to us had it not occurred at so late an hour." And Swinton, the Federal historian,

\* 1. As to the character of these works, they were built of heavy logs with earth piled against them to the thickness of five feet, and abattis in front.

2. "Through the long hours of the night we heard the rumbling of their guns, and thought they were evacuating the hill. The first streak of daylight revealed our mistake. It was scarcely dawn (the writer of this had just lain down to sleep, after a night in the saddle) when the artillery opened upon us at a range of about five hundred yards, a terrific and galling fire, to which we had no means of replying, as our guns could not be dragged up that steep and rugged ascent."—Letter of R. H. McKim soon after the battle.

declared, "It was a position which if held by him *would enable him to take Meade's entire line in reverse.*" It is only in keeping with the hap-hazard character of the whole battle that the capture of a point of such strategic importance should not have been taken advantage of by the Confederates. It remains, however, no less a proud memory for the officers and men of Steuart's brigade that their prowess gained for the Confederate General a position whence Meade's entire line might have been taken in reverse. But if the Confederates did not realize what they had gained, the Federals were fully aware what they had lost. Accordingly they spent the night massing troops and artillery for an effort to regain their works. "During the night," says Swinton, "a powerful artillery was accumulated against the point entered by the enemy." "To one conversant with the ground," says a Federal authority, "it is now apparent why the enemy did not reply. The creeks, the forest, and the steep acclivities made it utterly impossible for him to move his guns, and this circumstance contributed to the weakness of his position and the futility of his occupation of this part of the line."

Sufficient emphasis has not been laid upon the achievement of Steuart's brigade just referred to. It was probably the most important success attained on any part of our line, had our staff officers only recognized the fact. Let it be noted that this position was held by this devoted brigade for about fourteen hours, from 9 o'clock in the evening to 11 the

next morning, and the courage and tenacity exhibited by these troops was not surpassed by any unit of Lee's army in that great battle. Professor Jacobs (Federal) says, "The battle raged furiously and was maintained with desperate obstinacy on both sides." He goes on to speak of the terrible slaughter of our men. Gen. Howard says: "I went over the ground five years after the battle, and marks of the struggle were still to be observed. The moss on the rocks was still discolored in hundreds of places where the bullets had struck. The trees as cut off, knocked down, or shivered, were still there; stumps and trees were perforated with holes where leaden balls had since been taken out, and remnants of the rough breastworks still remained. I did not wonder that Gen. Geary, who was in the thickest of this fight, thought the main battle of Gettysburg must have been fought there." In fact, seven brigades were concentrated in the attack upon Stuart's brigade, and they were supported by a powerful artillery. Whitelaw Reid says, "From four to five there was heavy cannonading from our batteries nearest the contested point . . . the rebels made no reply . . . the musketry crash continued with unparalleled tenacity and vehemence."

## VI. THIRD DAY

We come now to the third and last day of the battle.

Count von Wartenburg, in his brilliant work on the

campaigns of Napoleon (published in 1902) says: "In the case of Lee we admire much that is Napoleonic in the conception of his plans." Now his determination to pierce the center of Meade's line on the third day was the adoption of one of Napoleon's favorite methods. "The young general, Bonaparte, initiated his brilliant career by piercing the enemy's center: He employed the same method again in 1812 in the most magnificent and well thought out manner, and once more in the opening of the last of all his campaigns. At Austerlitz he ordered Marechal Soult to assail the heights of Prätzen, thus piercing the center of the Austro-Russian Army. This gave him the victory. In the same way at Rivoli, he sacrificed his wings in order to decide the issue in the center; and again at Eylau; and yet again at Wagram." In the same way Lee now determined to assail the center of Meade's line, and gave directions to Longstreet to make the assault early next morning.

But the question has been raised, "Was Lee justified in expecting success in adopting this Napoleonic method at this center? Was there any reasonable hope of success in the grand assault which he ordered on the third day of the battle?"

In answering this question we may now take into account the statement made by Maj.-Gen. Doubleday, who commanded the 1st Corps of Meade's army. He says that "on the night of July 2d the state of affairs was disheartening. In the combats of the preceding days the 1st, 3d and 11th Corps had been almost annihilated; the 5th Corps and a



great part of the 2d were shattered and only the 6th Corps and the 12th were comparatively fresh." (Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, p. 185.)

He also says that Meade "thought it better to retreat with what he had than to run the risk of losing all." (*Id.*)

We know also from the testimony of Gen. Sickles before the Congressional Committee that at the Council of War the night of July 2d, some of the generals were in favor of a retreat.

Gen. Sorrell, Longstreet's chief of staff, admits in his book that the attack was to be made as soon as possible, and he adds, "the delay in attacking, which undoubtedly hurt us, was apparently caused by his objections made known to the Commander-in-Chief." (p. 171.)

And now we have a repetition of the events of the previous day. Instead of attacking early in the morning Longstreet did not begin his dispositions to attack until 1 P.M. He argued against Lee's plan as he had done the day before; he was completely out of sympathy with his commander. Such was his self-esteem that he believed his judgment superior to that of Gen. Lee. The consequence of this delay was that instead of a simultaneous attack on the enemy's center by Longstreet, and on his right by Ewell and Hill, we have again a series of isolated attacks. In obedience to orders, Gen. Ewell attacked the enemy at sunrise. Meade, not assailed on his left, concentrated an enormous force against Ewell on his right; seven brigades, as just stated, attacked

Steuart's one brigade on Culp's Hill; and so before Longstreet had begun to get ready to make his attack on the center, Ewell's attack on the right had been made and defeated.

But this is not all. Gen. Longstreet disobeyed Gen. Lee in another respect; it is an unquestionable fact, supported by testimony from various sources, that Longstreet was directed to put his whole corps into the attack. Indeed he himself admits it. (See Henderson's Lecture, p. 15.)\* The divisions of McLaws and Hood and Pickett were all to be employed. He was to be reinforced moreover by Heth's division, and by two brigades of Pender's division, to the command of which Major-Gen. Trimble was assigned—and Gen. Hill was ordered to afford Gen. Longstreet further assistance if necessary. Instead of this Longstreet sent forward about 12,000 men † only to assail the whole Federal Army. They made the assault, those Virginians and North Carolinians, with magnificent gallantry. They pierced the enemy's center, but where were their supports? where were the divisions of McLaws and Hood? Where the brigades Hill was to put in? The answer is,—*idle*,

\* "He rode over after sunrise and gave his orders. His plan was to assault the enemy's left centre by a column to be composed of McLaw's and Hood's divisions, reinforced by Pickett's brigades. I thought it would not do."—*Longstreet*.

† This is the estimate of Jesse Bowman Young, a Federal writer, in his valuable book, *The Battle of Gettysburg*, published in 1913 by Harper Bros., p. 306. He points out that Wilcox's brigade took no part in the assault.

*looking on, doing nothing!* This devoted column of 42 regiments, possibly 12,000 men, assaulted nearly the whole Federal Army, while four-fifths of the Confederate Army looked on without firing a shot. At the moment of their success they looked back vainly for support; "not a single Confederate bayonet, save in the hands of wounded or retreating men, was between them and the ridge from which they had advanced, 1200 yards in the rear. Fiercely they struggled to maintain their position, but their courage had been thrown away." (*Id.*, p. 16.)

Could there be a more conspicuous illustration of the disregard of Napoleon's maxim that in a decisive attack the last man and the last horse should be thrown in?\*

And now we have a strange incident to record—Col. Freemantle, the accomplished English officer, who was present with Longstreet's command during the battle, tells us in his book (p. 281) that Longstreet talked to him for a long time about the battle; he said the mistake they had made was in not concentrating the army more and making the attack with 30,000 instead of 15,000 men. That mistake, we know infallibly, was not made by Gen. Lee, but

\* "The staff, as we have seen, seemed utterly incapable, throughout the battle, of bringing the efforts of the larger units into timely coöperation, and at the most important crisis of the whole engagement their failure to insure combination was conspicuous. In the first place there is no doubt that Lee intended that 30,000 men should have been employed instead of 15,000."—(*Henderson*, p. 18.)

by Gen. Longstreet himself. Had Gen. Lee really intended to assail the Federal position with so slender a column, he would have been unworthy the command of a great army.

### WAS SUCCESS POSSIBLE?

The question has often been discussed, "What would have been the result if Lee's orders had been carried out and this charge of Pickett's division been supported by the troops of McLaws and Hood or those of Hill?"

I am able to throw light on that question from three sources: *First*, by the courtesy of Col. R. P. Chew, Jackson's chief of horse artillery, I am able to give an opinion expressed by Capt. Fitzhugh, who commanded a battery in the Federal Army at that point of the line. At the crisis of the charge he was ordered by Gen. Hunt to put in his battery and open on the charging Confederates. He expressed to Col. Chew astonishment that Pickett's charge had not been supported, saying that he could see large bodies of troops available for this purpose but making no movement in their support. Col. Chew asked Capt. Fitzhugh what in his opinion would have been the result if they had been advanced to Armistead's support. He said they would have pierced the Federal Army and certain defeat would have awaited it. "The Federal troops were streaming to the rear and fresh troops thrown into the breach would have decided the battle in favor of the Confederates."

*Secondly.* Testimony of a Federal artilleryman: On Tuesday, November 11, 1913, at 924 Pennsylvania Avenue, S. E., I had a conversation with W. A. Bobb, who left home at 14 and entered the United States service. He was 16 years old at time of the battle, and served as a private in Battery A, 2d Corps, United States Army. He was engaged at the point where Armistead's men broke through the Federal line. He said that the ammunition (of his battery) was almost exhausted; only two or three rounds left. In his opinion, if the charge had been supported, it would have proved disastrous to the Union Army. All the artillery would have fallen into our hands. Their horses were nearly all killed or disabled. Their support, a New York regiment, 200 yards in rear, had taken to flight and left them alone.

I give a third testimony from the Federal side of this point.

The late Gen. W. P. Craighill (of the Union Army) said that he had often reflected with a feeling of awe on the fact that that great charge on the third day was a wedge that almost split the Union in two. In his opinion, if the charge had been supported, as Lee ordered, it would have wrecked the Union line and given the Confederates a decisive victory.

Thus we have concurrent testimony from a private artilleryman, from the captain of a battery, both at the salient when the shock of the charge broke over, and from a general officer—an accomplished engineer.

I hold, therefore, in the light of this testimony that our great commander was justified in ordering that

grand assault on July 3d, and that had his orders been carried out, as they might and should have been, it would have resulted in a decisive victory.

Gen. Longstreet himself tells us that Lee's plan was "to assault the enemy's left center by a column composed of McLaw's and Hood's divisions, reinforced by Pickett's brigades." And Young (p. 307) quotes Anderson's orders that Wilcox and Perry's brigades were to render assistance, and also Wright's and Posy's brigades, but *he received orders from Gen. Longstreet to stop the movement.*

The evidence in the case is conclusive. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee tells us: "Three of Gen. Lee's trusted staff officers—Taylor, Venable, and Long—have recorded that the plan of assault involved an attack by Longstreet's whole corps, supported by one-half of Hill's, or all of it, if he called for it. . . . A consummate master of war, such as Lee was, would not drive *en masse*, a column of 14,000 men . . . to attack an army, of 100,000, and give his entering wedge no support." \*

There was no serious fighting after the repulse of the great charge on the 3d of July. During the night Gen. Lee withdrew his left wing from Culp's Hill, and the morning of July 4th found his army in line of battle on Seminary Ridge. Here he stood throughout the day ready to receive Gen. Meade, but Meade made no attempt to attack him.†

\* Fitzhugh Lee's *Life of Lee*, p. 289.

† Colonel Henderson, in his lecture on the Battle of Gettysburg, delivered nearly twenty years after the event, falls into

## VII. WAS GETTYSBURG A FEDERAL VICTORY?

Light is thrown upon this question by the testimony of several general officers given before the Congressional committee on the conduct of the war in the years 1864-5. Thus Gen. Sickles testified (Part I, page 302) that "at a council of war held on Friday night, July 3d, there was a pretty strong disposition to retreat." He further testified that the "reason why the enemy was not followed up was on account of differences of opinion whether or not we should ourselves retreat." Again he said, "It was by no means clear in the judgment of the corps commanders, as

two serious errors. He says (p. 16), that during the night of July 3d, "slowly followed by his adversary, Lee fell back through the South Mountain passes, and away southward across the Potomac into Virginia." But in fact Lee did not begin his retreat until the night of July 4th, and did not cross the Potomac until July 13th. On p. 14, he says, of July 3d, "The day opened ominously. As the sun rose, a vigorous attack of the Federals on Culp's Hill, prepared during the night, drove Johnson's Division in panic down the hill." Instead of this there were at least six hours of stern conflict after the sun rose, for possession of Culp's Hill, and when Stuart's brigade of Johnson's Division finally yielded the hill, they marched steadily down without confusion, rout or panic, in spite of their long hours of terrible battle and their immense losses.

Elsewhere in his writings he makes the great mistake of putting the white population of the seceded States at 7,000,000, instead of 5,000,000, which is the figure given in the census.

The lecture referred to is published also in Henderson's *Science of War*, Chapter X, pp. 285 *seq.*

of the General in command, whether we had won or not."

Major-Gen. Butterfield, Gen. Meade's chief of staff, testified (page 426) that, "on the night of the 4th of July a council of war was held to decide the question, 'Shall we assume the offensive,' and that Gen. Newton, Gen. Sedgwick, Gen. Howard, Gen. Birney, Gen. Pleasanton, Gen. Hays, and Gen. Warren, all voted 'no' to that question."

Major-Gen. Birney (page 367) testified that "at a council of war held on the night of July 4th, the opinion was expressed that Lee was not retreating, but making a flank movement." Several of the council (page 368) voted to retreat, but it was finally decided by a vote of 3 to 5 to wait twenty-four hours before retreating. It was stated that Gen. Meade did not wish to hazard a battle unless certain of victory. However, he intended to be guided by the opinion of his corps commanders. As a matter of fact, the Federal Army remained at Gettysburg Saturday, Sunday and Monday, July 4th, 5th and 6th (page 369). Major-Gen. Hunt (page 453) testified that "on the 3d of July, after the great charge had failed, our troops had been very roughly handled when they were attacked, and for that reason it was not easy to make a counter-attack." He further says that "in his opinion there were good reasons for not attacking Lee that afternoon, July 3d." In a letter written January 12, 1888, to Gen. Webb, Gen. Hunt says, "Gen. Meade was right in not attempting a counter-attack at any stage of the battle." Maj.-



Gen. Sedgwick, second in command, testified (page 460) that "it was not expedient, in his judgment, to attack Lee after such a charge as this." As to the condition of the Federal Army, we may infer what it was from the testimony of Major-Gen. Warren, Chief of Engineers (page 380), "I should have fought on the morning of the 12th of July if I could have got my troops to fight."

This testimony of the corps commanders of the Army of the Potomac, given under oath, makes it very evident that the officers and men who fought the Army of Northern Virginia those three days of July, 1863, had no idea at the close of the battle that they had gained a victory. Gen. Meade himself, the Commander-in-Chief, had no contemporaneous delusions on the subject of Gettysburg, as is made manifest by a letter addressed to his wife on the 8th of July, 1863. In it he announced to her his appointment of Brigadier-General in the Regular Army, which Halleck had forwarded to him, complimenting him on the victory at Gettysburg, and Gen. Meade proceeds, "I send you a document received yesterday afternoon. It will give you pleasure, I know. Preserve it, because the terms in which the General-in-Chief speaks of the battle are stronger than any I have deemed it proper to use myself. I never claimed a victory, though I stated that Lee was defeated in his efforts to destroy my army."\* This then is the judgment of the man who commanded the Federal Army at Gettysburg—he "never claimed a victory."

\* *Life and Letters of General Meade*, vol. II, p. 133.

To this let me add an extremely interesting statement found in the diary of Col. Freemantle, the English soldier already quoted. He says (p. 287 of his narrative) that the "officer at whose headquarters he was lodged told him that one of the enemy's despatches had been intercepted, in which the following words occurred: 'THE NOBLE BUT UNFORTUNATE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC HAS AGAIN BEEN OBLIGED TO RETREAT BEFORE SUPERIOR NUMBERS.' "

In a correspondence with the late Gen. Sickles a year or two before his death I told him of this incident, whereupon he wrote that that might be the explanation of what Gen. Slocum, who commanded the 12th Corps at Gettysburg, used to say to him before his death in a mysterious way, holding up two fingers, "I have a piece of paper about that size that would throw a wonderful light on what happened at Gettysburg, but, as I like to avoid controversy, I shall not publish it, leaving it to my heirs to do so if they choose."

Two other facts should be considered in deciding the question whether the Federal Army won a victory at Gettysburg. The first is that Lee offered battle on Seminary Ridge all day of July 4th, but the Federal commander would not accept the gauge. In this connection it is interesting to note that Gen. Butterworth said that he conversed July 4th with a corps commander who had just left Gen. Meade, and that he said, "Meade says he thinks he can hold out here, if they attack him" (page 204). It is pretty clear that Gen. Meade was not of the opinion at that

time that the Confederate Army had been defeated, and that his solicitude was for the safety of the Army of the Potomac, not for the destruction of the Army of Northern Virginia. The other fact is that the Army of the Potomac did not dare to attack the Army of Northern Virginia from the 3d of July, 1863, till May, 1864. Had Gettysburg been a Federal victory, this would have been an inexplicable fact.

### LEE'S RETREAT

We come now to Gen. Lee's retreat. What was its cause and what was its character? Having offered battle all of the 4th of July on Seminary Ridge, and the offer having been declined, he took up his march the night of the 4th and the morning of the 5th for Virginia.

Gen. Meade held a council of war near Williamsport on the 12th of July to consider whether he should attack Gen. Lee in his position at Falling Waters. As to this we have the testimony of Major-Gen. Warren, Chief of Engineers, before the Congressional Committee already referred to (page 381). He said he never saw the principal corps commanders so unanimously in favor of not fighting as on that occasion, and Major-Gen. Sedgwick (already quoted) says (page 452) that "at a council of war, July 12th, all but two voted against attacking Lee."

Observe now that Lee's retreat was rendered necessary, not by the condition of his army, but by the

necessity of replenishing the ammunition chests, which were all but exhausted (see Col. Taylor). His retreat was slow and deliberate. He offered battle again for three days at Falling Waters, near Hagerstown, but although Meade had been heavily reinforced, and was strongly urged by Mr. Lincoln to attack and destroy Gen. Lee, who stood at bay with a swollen river in his rear, he, with the assent of his council of war, again decided against making such an attack. It is a great mistake to suppose that the Confederate Army was demoralized. I saw a good deal of different commands in the army during those ten days after the battle, and I can testify that they were full of fight and eager for an opportunity to redeem the mistakes made at Gettysburg. At length, on the night of the 13th of July, eleven days after the close of the battle, Gen. Lee recrossed the river in the face of Meade's great army. And he effected his crossing with such success that his entire loss consisted of two guns, a few wagons, and some 500 exhausted men.

Here let me quote the generous testimony of a Federal officer: "It is difficult to imagine a more discouraging situation than that in which Gen. Lee found himself between July 4th and 14th. Decisively repulsed in battle and compelled to retreat, his communications were suddenly severed by the destruction of his only bridge, and by floods at the fords.

"Yet it is clear that never once through those trying days did the commander or his men show any signs of demoralization. On the contrary, it is certain

that they would have welcomed an attack on their entrenched lines about Falling Waters.” \*

Reviewing the whole campaign, I think it is plain that Lee lost the battle of Gettysburg by the failure of four splendid soldiers upon whom he had been accustomed to rely. His strategy was not at fault (of his tactics perhaps we cannot say as much); the orders issued were correct, and should have resulted in victory. But one thing we are compelled to acknowledge; Gen. Lee did not enforce that prompt and implicit obedience to his will as commander-in-chief which he should have done; and without which success in a great campaign can hardly be achieved. Gettysburg was a drawn battle it is true; a fight in which 68,000 men were pitted against at least 105,000. We may sum up the results by saying that on the first day the Confederates won a great victory; on the second day they also won two important successes both on Culp’s Hill and at the Peach Orchard and in the Devil’s Den; on the third day the great attack on the center was repulsed, and also that on Meade’s right.

Thus it was on the whole a drawn battle, in which the Federals lost many more in killed, wounded and prisoners than the Confederates. But a drawn battle under the circumstances was a defeat. Complete victory was essential to success and although the Army of Northern Virginia afterwards fought many

\* *Campaign and Battle of Gettysburg*, by Col. G. J. Fieberger, p. 139.)

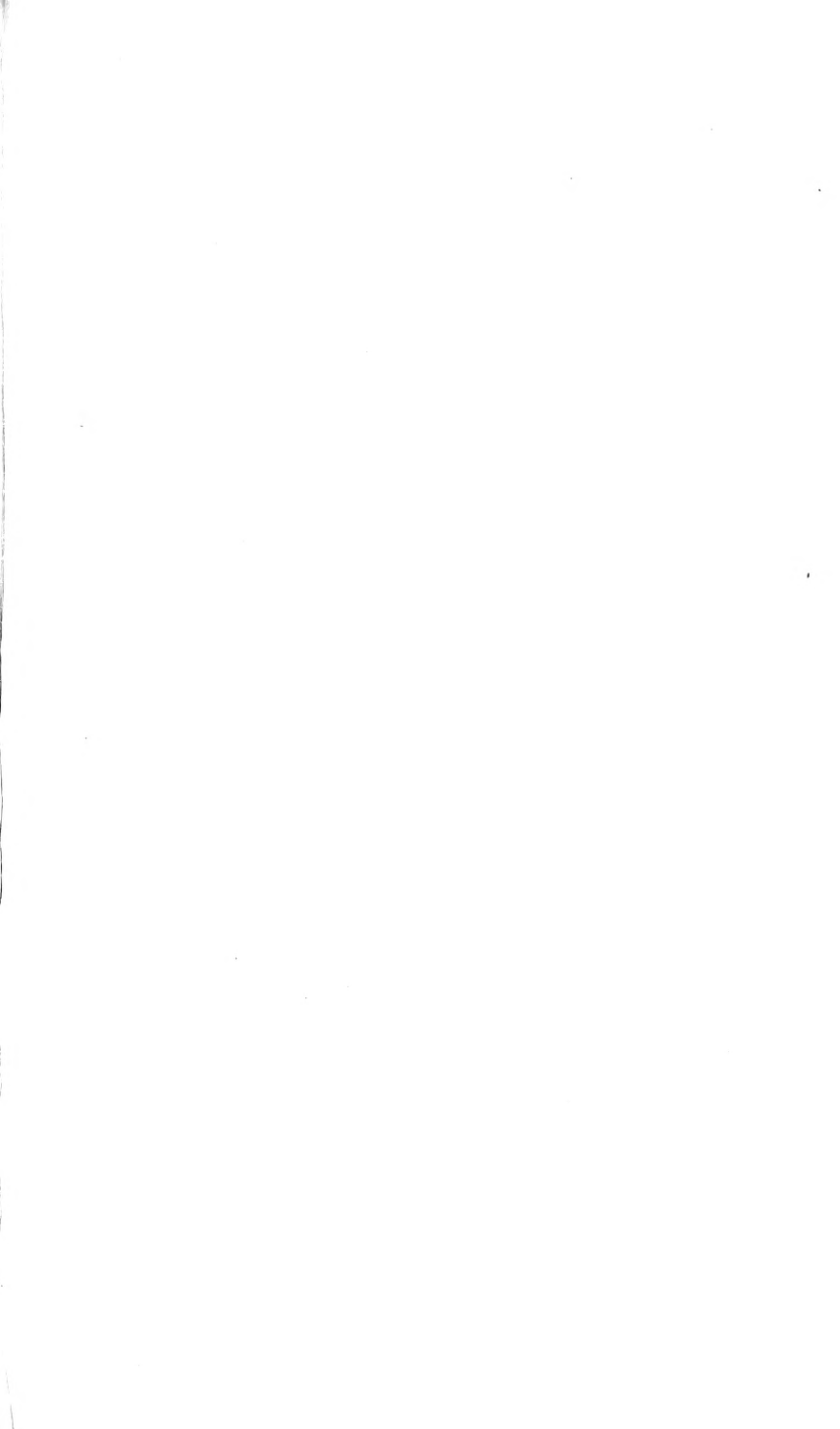
splendid battles, with magnificent courage, and often with great success, between July, '63, and April, '65, nevertheless the battle of Gettysburg does mark the beginning of the decline of the Confederate hopes.

As we ponder the circumstances of that great battle and note how one after another the omens of success were turned to defeat, through no fault of our great commander, we can only feel that Lee, like Hector of Troy, was fighting against the supernal powers. It was not the will of God that we should succeed. And when I try to understand the ultimate cause of our failure, I am led to the conclusion that it was not the will of the Great Ruler of events that the destinies of the Anglo-Saxon race on the American continent should be left in the hands of those who were then our enemies. The Southern people were necessary then, they are necessary now for the accomplishment of the designs of Providence. The Lord could not trust the North to fulfil His great purposes on this continent without the aid of the Southern people. Their sanity, their conservatism, their true Americanism were necessary elements in working out the great future of the race in this western land.









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